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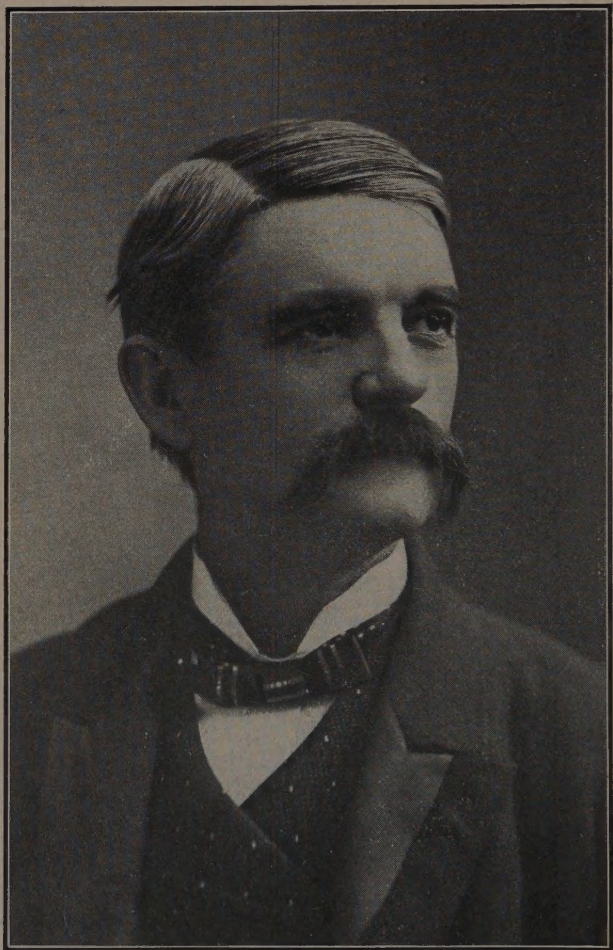
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COMPILED BY HIS DAUGHTER

ANNIE JONES PYRON



NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

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Sermons

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To

*Those who knew and loved him, to those who were
reclaimed under his ministry, to those who learned
to know Jesus Christ through his teachings, and to
those who will be benefited through the
reading of these sermons, I
dedicate this book.*

A Foreword

IN many respects the most remarkable man of his period was Rev. Sam P. Jones, of Cartersville, Georgia.

He travelled widely—the whole continent was his parish—and preached often and to audiences of thousands.

He was wise and witty, sympathetic and tender. In the white light of the most searching criticism, no fault was ever found in him.

His private and home life was charming. He was an evangelist of high class, original, unique, successful; as fearless as Elijah, as startling as John the Baptist, as tender as St. John the Beloved, and as irresistible as a whirlwind.

His phenomenal success sprang first of all from his piety. He was a thoroughly good man—a lover of men for Christ's sake. Then he had a simplicity of manner that broke down all embarrassment—children loved him, and the lowliest felt at home in his presence.

His style of preaching, as shown in this volume, was as striking as his personality. He copied no man. A child of nature himself, he preached with

simplicity, naturalness, and directness. These are not ordinary sermons; indeed, they are not sermons at all, but the voice of a seeker after souls. The people heard him gladly and thousands were saved.

May the reading of these pointed messages continue his useful ministry.

JOSEPH S. KEY.

SHERMAN, TEXAS.

Explanatory Note

THERE have been many calls, since Mr. Jones' death five years ago, for copies of his sermons, and I am sending out this first volume of them, trusting that they may reach many thousand men and women who need the saving power of the Gospel as preached by this man of God.

I crave no greater thing than that it may be said of him:

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” He laboured constantly for thirty-four years for fallen humanity, and I am sure could he speak, his desire would be as mine, that every one who reads these sermons, may receive a great spiritual blessing.

MRS. SAM P. JONES

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I

GOD'S LOVE FOR THE WORLD

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—JOHN iii:16.

THERE is no verse of scripture in all the Word of God so assuring, and so reassuring to my faith and hope, as the one which we read for the text.

"For God so loved"—not Europe simply, not America simply, not the isles of the sea simply, but "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I thank God! it has been my privilege to preach the gospel to thousands and tens of thousands and to hundreds of thousands in thirty states of this great union, but above all things, I am grateful to God for such a text, from which I can preach to the multitude.

My voice, at best, will not compass more than eight or ten thousand hearers. But the message of this text goes out on its mission of mercy to the fourteen hundred millions that live and walk upon the face of the earth. My voice, at best, cannot be heard by more than eight or ten thousand hearers, but this text, with its arms of love and mercy, compasses a guilty world.

"For God so loved the world." God's name and God's nature are Love. It is just as natural for God to love, as it is for the noonday sun to shine. The

sun is a great, burning, shining sphere, and it shines because it is its nature to shine. The sun is no respecter of bodies, as he shines; he shines on the bald mountain, the verdant valley, the blossoming rosebud, and the dead tree. He shines on all bodies alike, that exist under his rays.

God's name and God's nature are Love. God is no respecter of persons in His love. He loves all men alike. He loves the meanest man in America, as well as He loves the best man in America. He loves the most abandoned sinner in each community, as much as He loves the holiest saint. I will go further, and say God loves the poor lost sinner, more than He loves the saint. You ask me where I get that doctrine, and I tell you that I get it from the lips of Christ Himself.

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

You say, "I haven't so read my Bible. I have been taught that if I am good God will love me, and if I am not good God will not love me." This great truth, God's love, His universal love for the race, is taught in this one announcement—The Fatherhood of God. The Bible not only clearly teaches the Fatherhood of

God, but it teaches also as clearly the Motherhood of God. God is my Mother as truly as God is my Father. It is glorious to me to walk up into the presence of God my Father, and listen to His words of counsel and reproof; but sweeter by far than this, is to occasionally walk up into the arms of God, my Mother, and receive the kiss of love and have Him speak out from a mother's heart.

The very fact that God is my Father and that God is my Mother, is proof to me and to all men that God loves us and that He can never do anything but love us. How bad does a boy have to be before his mother quits loving him? Did you ever think of that? How bad does a boy have to become before a mother ceases to love him? I point you to the saddest face, the most pathetic voice, this world ever saw or heard, as that mother stands out before the pitiless world, and asks,

“Where is my wandering boy to-night,
The boy of my tenderest care,
The boy that was once my joy and light,
The child of my love and prayer?

“Go for my wandering boy to-night,
Go search for him where you will,
And bring him to me in all his blight,
And tell him I love him still.

“O, where is my boy to-night?
O, where is my boy to-night?
My heart o'erflows, for I love him, he knows,
O, where is my boy to-night?”

Mother loves her boy when he is little, loves him in youth, loves him in manhood, loves him in his old age, and loves him while he lives, and loves him when he dies. And the beautiful flowers that adorn his grave tell the world that looks upon it, that a mother's love will never die.

The Koran says, "God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers as a sign of His everlasting love." No road is too rough, no path too lonely, no hill too steep, for the mother to travel to her boy when he is in trouble. And O young man, let me tell you, your most glorious achievement is the fact that you love and honour mother.

I believe God loves us when we are little, when we are grown up, when we are good, when we are bad, and when we die. I believe God will love you and me in heaven forever, and I believe God will love us in hell forever.

"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

"Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

And what reason has God for being in hell, but to sorrow over His poor lost children?

You say, "Mr. Jones, you are preaching my doctrine now. I have told people all the time that if God loved sinners like that, nobody could be damned,—that a loving, merciful, heavenly Father could not damn His children forever." The trouble with you, brother, is that you don't see all around this truth. That's where you are lacking. You see just one side of it and conclude you have seen the whole thing. Let me ask you just this one, simple question, "Can Love save?" If Love could save, no mother's boy would ever stagger into a drunkard's grave. "Can Love save?" If Love could save, no good wife's husband would ever die upon the gallows. Love can pity, Love can help, Love can suffer, Love can die, but

"The blood, the blood is all my plea,
The blood, the blood, it cleanseth me."

Love! The divinest, the sublimest, the most omnipotent passion in the universe of God.

I have sometimes sat down and buried my face in my hands, and thought for a moment, "Oh, where in all the universe is God's great storehouse of colours, from which the rainbow gets its every hue, and each blushing flower its tints?" The answer comes back, "I know not." Then again, I have said to myself, "Oh, where in the universe is God's great storehouse of music, from which every warbling bird gets its melodies, from which all the spheres are supplied with their harmonies?" And again the answer comes back, "I know not." And then, in the better, sweeter moments of my life, I have asked, "Oh, where is the great storehouse of God's love, from which every mother gets her love for her children, and every father his love for his home, every brother his love for his sister, and every husband his love for his wife?" The answer comes leaping back, "It is the great heart of God, pouring itself out, like a gushing river, into every human heart in this world." And your love for wife, and my love for my wife, my love for my darling Mary, my love for sweet little Bob, my love for the little ones of my home, is emptied out of the great heart of God, into this little heart of mine. O Thou great fountain of gushing, melting, sympathetic love, evermore pour Thy currents into human life and into human hearts!

"For God so loved the world," I repeat it. This Love is no respecter of persons. God loves all men alike. I like a gospel that announces itself to the world like this,

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

I like a gospel that says,

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I like a gospel that reads this way,

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

I like a gospel that looks every man in the face and says to him, "You have the opportunity to be a good man and you ought to be one." I like a gospel that gives every child of God a square deal, and that gives every man a chance to get to heaven. And I announce it as the conscientious belief of my heart, with the open Bible before me, that I verily believe there is not a soul in hell to-day, that might not have been in heaven. There is not a soul shouting and shining around the throne of God, but that might have made the choice of hell. Verily I believe, brother, that no soul ever sank down to despair and death and hell, until it had at least one good, fair chance for heaven and had utterly and persistently rejected it. I believe that when Jesus Christ arose from the grave, and God grasped the stylus, and signed the Magna Charta of man's salvation with His own right hand—I believe in that moment that God made it possible for every man, who was, or ever will be born, to come to Jesus Christ and be saved. I believe that when God signed the Magna Charta of man's salvation and put it down in heaven's chancery, with a pen that was dipped in the blood of redemption, that every single man—no matter whether an Indian sun, or an African sun had burned him red or black, and no matter if a tropical sun had burned him yellow—the very mo-

ment he steps up and pleads the redeeming merits of Jesus Christ, will stand a redeemed and regenerated and disenthralled immortal spirit, with heaven as a certainty, and the peace of God as a guaranteed fact.

"In due time, Christ tasted death for every man." I believe that Bascom told the truth, when he said, "If you and I are lost at last, and take up our abode in hell, we will go down with the rainbow of God's mercy colouring our heaven, and with the waters of God's salvation purling in our ears." The chance is for all, and I believe my Bible because it gives me a chance for salvation, because it gives to my mother and father the same chance. I believe the Bible because it gives to every man a chance. Gives to each one of my children a chance, with a pledge in the great loving heart of God, that if he takes this chance and works it out under grace, then it is not simply a matter of speculation, but it is a divine certainty, a precious home for the soul forever.

I thank God for whatever may be the progress of the church in theology! I believe in progressive theology, but I believe in primitive Christianity. I don't think Christianity has ever been improved upon, but I think theology has made some good advancement to the glory of God and the good of humanity. I believe that, but evermore I pray, "Lord, give us apostolic Christianity. Evermore, Lord God, deliver us from some of the phases of orthodoxy, so-called." I have heard old ministers of the gospel get up and paint the wrath of God in all its keenness. I have seen old theologians, as they placed Jesus Christ on the cross, a victim of divine wrath, and a target for divine anger. And they represented the Son of God as hanging on the cross, and the Lord God of heaven pouring out the vials of wrath on His only begotten

Son. It's a lie! It's a lie! God never was mad, nor did He ever shoot the javelin from His great hand at the heart and body of His Son. God never was mad. But they say, "If God hadn't poured the wrath on His only begotten Son, He would have poured it on us." It is false! It is false! It is false!

The gospel of Jesus Christ comes to us from the great loving heart of God, and tells us,

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Do you get that idea? God never was mad with this world. God never poured out His wrath on His only begotten Son. Jesus Christ did not die for us to make God love us. Jesus Christ is not the expression of divine wrath and justice. He is the expression of God's love. For,

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. . . .

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Do you get that idea also? Then let me say to you, in all the honesty of my soul, I take Jesus Christ as the gift of God, I take Jesus Christ as God's expression of love for man. I take Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, knowing that no man cometh to the Father, but by Him. I take Jesus Christ as the way to heaven. It is the way opened up by Love. The mountains were dug low by His love, the valleys were filled by His love, the sacrifice was made by His love, the atonement was sealed by His love, and this great living, loving, longing heart

of God reaches down to every child of Adam, and would lead him to God and heaven.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

This love, unquestionable, manifest love! O my brothers, look how Love has supplied your every want. Do you want water? Look around you; three-fourths of the world's surface is covered with water. Do you want bread? Look at the vast harvest fields, waving together their golden heads, telling you, “Come and eat; be hungry no more.” Do you desire gold? God has filled the bowels of the earth with gold. Do you want friends? God says take the fourteen hundred millions of people that stand around you, and make every one of them your friend. Do you love literature? The pages of nature are lavishly displayed to your gaze. Do you want sympathy? God says to every man, “Pour out your streams of sympathy for this man.” Just look how God has piled up the manifestations of His love all about us!

I know there are two classes of men, and two only. The first class are those who know they do love God, and the second class are those who know they do not love God.

Now listen to the proposition. If such exhaustless love has been poured on you and on me, then the question comes up, for such exhaustless love and goodness, what does God ask of me in return? Every sensible man ought to ask himself this question. To tell you how God loves you, is the hardest thing in the world to do, but let me tell you, when you launch out into the bottomless, boundless love of God, there is neither bottom nor shore. It is the hardest task a preacher ever undertook to tell of God's infinite love for mortal man. There are some

analogies through which we may look and get some dim ray of light upon this question. For instance, we may take a mother's love for her boy. When all the world forsakes him, when all the world turns its back upon him, look how mother sticks to her boy. And did you ever notice, the worse the boy gets the more the mother loves him? If a mother has five sons and four of them are preachers, and the fifth is a drunken vagabond, you can go in where that mother is and say just what you please about those four preachers, but when you say a word about poor, drunken John, she will jump on you in a minute and say, "You shan't say a word against my poor, unfortunate boy." That mother may not love John more than she loves the other boys, but there is a greater strain on that mother's heart at that point.

I said to my wife some time ago, "Laura, I believe you loved me more when I was a drunken vagabond than you do now." She said, "Old fellow, you needed my love more then, but now you are able to 'tote your own skillet.'" There is a great deal of truth in that, as sure as you live.

But to return to a mother's love for her boy. Every one will turn their back upon him, may close their doors against him, may speak unkindly about him, and shut their pocketbooks up against him, but mother's doors stay open, mother's pocketbook stays open, mother's heart hopes on, and finally when he comes to die, mother pillows his head on her lap, and when her poor, restless, doomed boy breathes his last, she falls on his lifeless body, and kisses and embraces her poor, dead boy. Then she follows him to the grave—perhaps the only mourner—and when she comes back to the grave, ever and anon, she wets the sod with her tears of love and sympathy; and through it all, mother still clings to her boy.

When our mothers and fathers forsake us, then God will take us up. O the infinitude of such love! If a mother, with just a little of God's love in her heart, will unselfishly cling to her boy like that, much more, ten thousand times more, will the great heart of God cling to us, His wayward children.

We will take another picture. Here is a husband and wife. There is not a more holy relation in all the universe than this. A young man and young woman walk into the presence of a congregation of friends and loved ones, and the preacher, when their hands are joined together, says to them, "Do you mutually promise and agree, in the presence of these witnesses, to take each other as husband and wife, and live together after God's holy ordinance of matrimony, and do you further promise and agree to love, cherish, and keep each other, so long as you both shall live?" And when they speak their assent, the preacher says to them, "Now this twain shall be one." From that day, like the mingled dewdrops on the rose, they shall be one forever, one in thought, one in love, one in purpose. No more holy relationship was ever ordained or enjoyed by man, than the relationship of husband and wife. She gives herself to him and he gives himself to her, and these two are one, forever. And I believe this twain should be one, and if a man and his wife be one, can there ever be a difference? Did you ever think of that?

They tell this little joke on Dr. Hannon, that grand preacher on the Western coast, who has done so much for humanity and for God. He lived until after middle life before marrying. His ideas of married life were so exalted, that when he married and started on his bridal tour, he got on the train with his wife, and the conductor came for their tickets, and found that Dr. Hannon had bought only one ticket. And

when asked where the other ticket was, he said, "Why, we need only one ticket. We are married, and aren't we one?"

"And this twain shall be one." They enter upon the journey of life, as husband and wife. Happy they are, contented they live, joyously they move along, and by and by when the home has been blessed with three or four children, one day it is whispered around that this husband has begun to drink. Look here! There is a whole volume of a thousand pages in that one sentence, "Her husband began to drink."

O God, save this country from the tide of intemperance that is sweeping thousands and thousands to death and hell. You can't pick up a leading paper in the United States any day out of the seven, but that you read, "Wife murdered," "Mother murdered," "Child murdered," or "A suicide." And, oh, the horrible thought that this tide of intemperance is sweeping the best fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters down into the river of death, and into the river of destruction beyond.

That husband began to drink. That is the saddest hour in the life of any man. He goes from bad to worse, from worse to worst, and on he goes, until he has become so degraded that he has given up all idea of making an honest living and caring for his little children. The wife realizes that she is a drunkard's wife, and the children realize that they are a drunkard's children. Oh, what desolation!

One day I was walking along the street of this city, and I saw a saloon right on the corner, and just as I passed the door the saloonkeeper kicked out of his grog shop one of the most besotted, ragged, drunken wretches I ever saw, and as he kicked him out he said, "Get out of here; get off the place; never put your foot in here again." The poor fellow got

up, straightened himself up, and started down the street. I hastened along and said to myself, "I wonder if that man has a friend in all the world. If he hasn't, by the help of God, he shall have one." I stayed behind him and watched his staggering steps. He went down two blocks and started up an alley. I stepped to the corner, and saw a little cottage in the alley, and said, "I believe that's his home." I went up to the little home, and as I came to the doorway, I saw four little, ragged, half-clad, hungry, unkempt children on the floor. I turned my eyes a little further, and there was the poor little woman, stitching on garments for a merchant to obtain bread for her little ones. All at once, she looked out of the window and saw the besotted, drunken man. She turned and said to the children, "Be quiet, your father is coming." And the little fellows knew what that meant. They jumped up and scampered out of the room into a small back yard. She got up, laid down her work, and walked to the door. I looked at that thin face, and the blue veins in her temples, and her frail form, and I said, "O my God! which is the most unendurable, to lead a drunkard's life or be a drunkard's wife?" God in heaven only knows what that woman suffered. She stepped out of the door and met the poor, besotted, drunken wretch, and led him gently through the door, into the room, and to the bed. And there she eased him down. When his drunken form was spread out on the bed, she pulled off his muddy shoes, went to the little table, and wet the only towel she had, and bathed his bloated, fevered face. Then she lifted up her voice to heaven and said, "O Lord God, save my poor, drunken, besotted husband!"

What makes that wife cling to her husband in that faithful way? I tell you it is a little of the nature of

God, poured into that woman's heart. Then, if a wife, with a little of the love of God in her heart, will cling to a man like that, how much more, ten thousand times more, will God, who is a God of Love, cling to His wayward child?

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Thank God for love like this! If God loves me this way, and has given me every evidence of His love, then what does He ask of me? All that God ever asks of you and me, is that we love Him in return. For the exhaustless kindness and mercy He has bestowed on you and me, all that God ever asks of any man is that we should love Him in return. Now, as I said at first, there are two classes of men. The first, who know they do love God, and the second, who know they do not love God. The first class are those who know God, the second class are those who do not know anything about God, and therefore do not love Him. If you know God, you will love Him, and love Him in spite of yourself. When I looked up and saw how good God had been to my father, and how good He had been to my mother, and how good He had been to my wife, I said to myself, "To refuse to love so good a Father as that, is to unman myself, and I am obliged to love Him." When I learned to know God and His mercy and love, I said, "I will love Him," and I have loved Him more and more ever since.

I have a dog at my home, and when, weary after my labours, I return to my home, that dog, in the darkest hour of the night, will run halfway down the street that leads to the home, to meet me. He will jump up and kiss me as a dog will. And when I get in front of my gate, he bounds up to me and talks, as

a dog talks, and can be understood. He will say to me, "Where have you been so long? What made you stay away so long?" And then he will say, in the language of a dog, "Do you want a bird hunt while you are at home? If you do, clean up your gun and I am your dog. I'll find the birds for you, and if there is anything else a dog can do for his master, I am at your service." When I say to him, "Nero, what makes you so good to me, what makes you love me so?" he answers with his eye and his bark of joy, "Because you are so good to me. You never struck me. You have always been kind to me, and when you go away, I hear you tell Bob and Paul to be good to me and take care of me while you are away."

There's no use talking, boys, there's the secret of love. And when I have met my wife and children, I walk down to the stable where my noble horse stands, and as I go into the stall he will put his face up to mine and kiss me, and look out of his great, intelligent eyes and say to me, "I am so glad to see you home again. I wish you wouldn't go off any more. Do you want a ride? If you do, just get the boy to put the saddle on me, and I will give you whatever gait you want. Do you want to drive? If so, I will give you the best drive you ever had. Hitch me up and see if I don't." And I say to him, "Dexter, old boy, why are you so good to me? Why do you love me so?" And out of the great, intelligent eyes of my horse comes the answer, "Because you are so good to me. Because you first loved me."

And if you ever really look at God and learn to know Him, and then you do not love Him, and are not willing to do anything you can for Him, you are lower than my dog and my horse. O that we might get out from under the dogs and horses and be men!

Love! When love won't win a man, he's gone. If love can't stir you and move you and lift you up, you are lower than the animals and the beasts of the fields.

God's love is not only a universal love, but, thank God, it is a specific love. God loves each one of us, just as if there was only one of us in all the world. I like that. I have heard people say they didn't have any favourites among their children. Well, I don't know about that. You say, "Jones, which one do you love the best?" I'll tell you: it's the one that is sick and in trouble. That's the one that gets me every time. I am like the old man, who, when his daughter married, said to her, "Daughter, if you get along all right, you needn't write to me, you needn't send me any messages, but if you are sick or in trouble, let your father know at once." My! My! When one of my little fellows gets sick and begins to suffer, I don't know I've got but one then. The other five don't count at all. And God is a good deal like that. While we are well, and everything is prosperous with us, God doesn't bother much about us; but when we are in trouble, that's the time when the Lord comes around. The Lord does not bother much with us when we are getting on all right, but when the day of trouble comes, the Lord comes to us, and says,

"Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee."

You remember the time when Jesus was on top of the mountain, praying and communing with the Father. All at once, one of those sudden squalls struck the little Sea of Galilee. Jesus said, "My disciples are going across that lake," and looking over the lake, He saw the little ship rolling and tossing and rocking on the little sea. He looked again and saw Peter's affrighted face. He arose and said, "I must go to My disciples." He saw the big waves al-

most overwhelm the little ship, and coming down the mountain, He hurried toward His disciples. When He got to the beach of the little lake, He looked up and down, and there was no boat in sight. He said, "How I wish I had a boat that I might go out and help My disciples in distress." And then another great wave struck the little ship, and He saw the affrighted face of Peter and He said, "Boat or no boat, I am going to My disciples." And He began to step from wave to wave, and directly He stepped up to the little ship, and the storm ceased immediately, and the little boat ran ashore. Oh, thank God, it isn't far from land when Jesus steps on board, and when you get into trouble is the time when Christ comes to your aid.

God loves every one of us, but those who need Him most, get most of Him, and I thank God for this specific love.

In conclusion let me say, this love is first helpful; second, it is sympathetic, and third, it is a pardoning love. I'll tell you how to get God's help. You help Him all you can and He will help you all He can. God hates to see an old father get down on his knees and say, "O Lord, help me to raise my children right," and then go downtown where he sees whiskey legally or illegally sold, and never open his mouth. He sees the devil turned loose in town, and never says a word. Oh, how can a man pray to God to help him raise his children right, and then let the devil walk, roughshod, over them, and never open his mouth? When I pray to God to help me raise my children right, I am going to pitch in and help God all I can, knowing that He will help me all He can.

This love is a sympathetic love. What a world there is in the word "sympathy." Do you know who

can do more than any one in the world, with me? My wife. And do you know why? In the bottomless, boundless depths of her heart, there is a sympathy for me which can be shown by no other human being on earth. I like sympathy and I like the fellow who has it, I like the woman who has it. Sympathy is the divinest thing that ever touched a human heart, or influenced a human life. When the world gets full of human sympathy, it will lift itself up to God's great heart, which pours itself out in love and sympathy for a lost and hungry world.

And such is God's sympathetic love for you and me, and for the poor fellow who is homeless and friendless. And, thank God! all who will, may accept this sympathetic love.

Some time ago I was in Roberson County, Tennessee—went there to make a temperance speech, and right here let me say I am sorry for the preacher who never made a temperance speech. Thank God I have made many a one and am going to make some more. As I stood there that day, surrounded by those wool-hat fellows, with the smoke of damnation belching forth from many distilleries around me, and spoke with all my ransomed powers for an hour and a half, I noticed a poor drunken fellow sitting at my feet, keep wiping his eyes, while the tears coursed down his cheeks. After I had finished speaking, I was driven to the home of kind friends, and being utterly exhausted, I asked to go at once to my room, telling my hostess I did not want to be disturbed. In a few moments, the lady of the house knocked at my door, and from the lounge upon which I was lying, I said, "Come in." She opened the door and said, "Mr. Jones, there is a man at the door and he will not leave without seeing you."

I said, "Why, sister, you see how exhausted I am

and how totally unfit I am to see any one. But what does the fellow look like?" She said, "He is the poor old drunken man, who cried so during your talk." I said, "Well, turn him in. I used to belong to that gang." In a few moments he walked into the room, ragged, dirty, and besotted. I said to him, "What can I do for you, my brother?" He said, "Mr. Jones, I know you think I came to beg for money, but I did not. I heard you talk this morning, and I said, while you were speaking, 'There is one man whom I believe has some sympathy for a poor, drunken dog, like me.' Mr. Jones, I was once a prosperous business man. I graduated at one of our prominent Southern colleges. I settled in a Tennessee town, married, and God blessed my home with four children. My business prospered, until the curse of drink overpowered me, and I lost home and all. My wife died of a broken heart, and my children were taken from me, and are now in an orphans' home in this state."

Pulling an old faded cap out of his pocket, he continued, "Mr. Jones, this little hat is all I have left of a happy family and a prosperous home—this belongs to my little blind boy. I did not come to you to beg you for money, but to ask for one word of sympathy, that I believe you can give." He turned and started out of the room. I turned to my stenographer and said, "Frank, take this man to town, have him bathed, put new clothes on him, and feed him and bring him back to me." When they returned an hour or two later, I did not know the man. When he came in I said, "Take this dollar, and get on the train and ride thirty-three miles, get off in the woods, strike out and get you a school, and when you feel tempted and friendless, remember there is a little sallow-faced fellow in Georgia, who will stick to you 'till his heels

fly up.' ” In a few weeks, I had a letter from him telling me he had a school, and would soon be able to send for his children. In a little while, I got another letter from him, saying he was doing well and had his children with him. And he said, “ Every night I take up my little blind boy in my lap, and tell him what just a little sympathy in a human heart, poured out from the great sympathetic heart of God, will do for a poor, friendless wanderer.” Oh, I thank God that He has this sympathetic love, which pours itself out into your heart and into mine.

Lastly, this love is a pardoning love. Does God pardon a sinner, you ask? Yes, He will, and you ask again, “ How do you know, Sam Jones?” My friend, I know, because I have been there. That is settled in my mind and the devil never raises the question with me at all. I know I have God's pardoning love; I know it, for I was on the spot, and I can prove it by my neighbours, by my friends, by my wife, by everybody who lived within ten miles of me. They will all agree that Sam Jones has something.

After God had pardoned my sins, I was troubled. I said to myself, “ I believe I will get to heaven, but I don't believe I can hold up my head, when I do get there. I know I can never walk the golden streets in the centre of glory.” But one day I was sitting at home reading my Bible, and I saw that God had not only promised to pardon my sins, but that He would separate them from me, as far as the east is from the west. I said to myself, “ Hallelujah! If I can get them that far away, I will slip up on the front streets, occasionally,” and that was a great consolation to me. Another day, when I was reading, I saw that He not only forgave and separated us from our sins, as far as the east is from the west, but He said,

“ I will blot them out of the book of my remem-

brance. I will remember them against you no more forever." Then I said to myself, "Glory to God, now I'll walk the golden streets forever, a redeemed soul." Thank God! He not only separates our sins from us, but He blots them out of His book of remembrance, and remembers them against us no more forever."

I never knew the real significance of those words, "I will blot them out of the book of remembrance forever," until I was preaching for Brother James Morris, at the Fifth and Walnut Streets Methodist Church, Louisville, Kentucky. After my sermon, Brother Morris got up and told of the sins of his early years, how he had been a gambler, a drunkard, and a sinner in the sight of God. While he was talking, I looked over at his old mother. She was twisting and turning, and it seemed to me she could not control herself. She seemed to go to pieces like a jointed snake. When he sat down and the service was dismissed, she ran up to him, threw her arms around his neck and said, "Jimmie, what made you say that? What made you say you were a gambler and a drunkard? You know you have always been good." That precious old mother had forgotten that her boy had ever been a sinner, and I said, "Glory be to God! Though sunk in the depths of sin, God not only forgives us, but blots our sins out of the book of remembrance forevermore." And now I shall live in glory forever, as if I had never sinned.

O redeeming love that can cover up and hide our sins forever! If I had a thousand lives, I would live them all for God. If I had a thousand tongues, I would use them all to sing His praises.

"O for such love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues,
The Saviour's praises speak."

II

WHAT WAIT I FOR?

"And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee."—
PSALMS xxxix : 7.

IN view of all our surroundings, in view of our past life, in view of the present, and in view of all that the future may have for us, I want each man and woman to ask this question, "What wait I for?" Let each one gather up that question in his or her life. Here is life offered, here is heaven offered. Now, taking the whole situation in, let each man ask himself, "What wait I for?" It is not what your city waits for, it is not what your clique, or clan, waits for, it is not what your family is waiting for, it is "What wait I for?"

"What wait I for? My hope is in thee." That man, attentive and thoughtful, when we press this question upon him, and ask him what he is waiting for, says, "I am waiting for time to consider this question. This is a momentous question, one for time and eternity, and I do not want to be hurried into a thing of so much importance. I want time to consider this. An intelligent action is based upon wise, careful, intelligent thought, and I want time to consider this great question. Don't hurry me in this great matter."

Listen to me a moment, friends. Do you want time to consider whether you want to be a good man or a bad man, whether you had rather go to heaven or hell,

whether it is right to do right, or do wrong, whether it is right to set a good example in your home, or whether it is better to set a bad example? Do you want time to consider questions like these? How long ought it to take a sensible man to decide the question whether he had rather go to heaven or to hell? Whether it is better to do wrong than to do right, better to love God and keep His commandments, or better to do wrong and serve the devil? How much time does a sensible man want on a question like this? It seems to me that any man could decide in the twinkling of an eye. I have never seen a moment in my life when, if I brought my mind, with all its powers, to bear upon these questions for fifteen seconds, I could not decide them.

You ask for time to consider a question that some of you have settled twenty years ago. Some of you men settled it even longer ago than that. "It is right to do right, and I ought to do it. It is wrong to do wrong, and I ought not to do it."

O grey-headed fathers out of the church! Forty years ago you settled the question, that right was right and you ought to do it, and that wrong was wrong and you ought not to do it. And yet what are you waiting for? You certainly do not want time to consider these questions. But again you say, "When I make up my mind about this, I want it done deliberately, carefully, and prayerfully. I don't want any excitement about it."

Have you ever noticed that when any worldly influence wants to carry its point, there is always a great deal of excitement? I can take a brass band and get up a bigger stir in town than all the sermons that are preached in any town on any Sunday. With these few instruments, as men blow their breath into them, and strike the tinkling cymbals, more people are

aroused and enthused, than by any gospel sermon in truth and power, that can be used. And this makes me ashamed of myself, or ashamed of my race—or both. Enthusiasm? Without enthusiasm, man is already half dead. And if there is anything that ought to arouse excitement and enthusiasm, it is the great question of eternity. And the only use I have for enthusiasm, after all, is to make me, or to make you, do the thing that is right for us to do.

There is many a log adrift, floating out on the ocean; but when the spring tide, with its fearful breezes, and its inflowing waters sweeps in and out, there is many a log swept out, high and dry, that would never come out, but for those brisk breezes and rising tides. And my prayer is that God will send us just such a heavenward tide, and that it will sweep you into the kingdom of God, saved in spite of yourself; for if some of you are ever saved, it seems to me that it will be in spite of all the resisting you can do.

“I am waiting for time to consider this question, and as soon as I consider it long enough, I am going to decide.” Let me say to you at this point, you have already considered it, and all the preachers wait for, and the angels of God wait for, is for you to act upon the decision. You have already decided that it is right to do right, and wrong to do wrong, and the decision does not amount to anything until the man says, “I will act upon my decision.”

I might decide to go home, but I would die right here in the corporate limits of this town, unless I acted on this decision. And then I don't consider a question decided, in any sense, until it is decided in the sense that I act upon the decision. I speak it reverently before my brethren of the ministry, and my brethren in Christ, God Himself cannot help a man to

be good, until the man decides and starts out on his decision. My theology is this, and I haven't got much, but, thank God, I've got enough to keep me straight if I keep up with it, and that is this, God Almighty can't make any man good, and the devil can't make any man bad. God can help men to be good and the devil can help men to be bad. If God could arbitrarily make any man good, He would make all men good, for He wishes us all to be good. And if the devil could make any one arbitrarily bad, he would make us all bad, because he wants us all bad. If you want to be good, the Lord will help you, and if you want to be bad, the devil will help you. God will not help a man to be good unless the man decides to be good.

Whenever a man chooses to be good, God throws the deciding point on the man's will—"whosoever will"; you choose this day and say, "I choose to do good," and then you can command the resources of God's omnipotence and love; but until you decide to do good, God Himself cannot help you to be good. That is common sense and theology, and I do believe you can mix common sense and religion, and when you do mix it, it makes a mighty good compound. Common sense and religion, mixed in equal parts, make a man that loves God and humanity.

But you say to me, "I am not waiting for time to consider this: I am troubled about the mysteries of the Bible. I am waiting until I can understand the Bible." Well, ~~brother, I have been a follower of Jesus Christ for many years, and there are many things I do not understand, and I thank God for it. If I could understand all of it, I would know that some one with no more sense than I, wrote it. But I tell you the hardest, steepest part of the Bible is where the Ten Commandments are given to man, and,~~

thank God, both you and I can understand them. There is no mystery there. Jesus said, "If any man will do my will, he shall know the doctrine." You watch the Ten Commandments and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you need not worry about the mysteries in the Bible.

But, ~~you say again~~, "I am not troubled about the mysteries of the Bible. I'll tell you what I'm waiting for. I am waiting for better terms. I tell you the terms and conditions of salvation are mighty tough, when a man has to give up everything." But ~~I say to you~~ a man has to give up mighty little, and he gets a great deal in return. ~~I am glad~~ the terms are just what they are. ~~I am very glad~~ the good Lord will never take a man into His kingdom until that man decides to cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Suppose the Lord had said to me when I was seeking religion, "You need not give up drinking. You can be my child, and drink on." I would be in a drunkard's grave this minute, if He had said that. I am so glad I threw down the cup and said to my Lord, "I have drunk my last drop."

I am ~~so~~ glad that God Almighty does not take a man into the kingdom until he has given up everything that could disgrace him in this world, or damn him in eternity. I am not going to say some things were not hard for me to give up. But I will say this much. I have heard some people talk about sacrifices, but I say, "Blessed Saviour! I have never made a sacrifice to Thee, and to-day I can say it with the consciousness that there is not a cross for me in serving Thee." I used to sing,

"Simply to the cross I cling."

I have sung that many a time and I thank God for the

privilege of singing it. But now my song all the day is,

“Safe in the arms of Jesus.”

It is a prostrate and a recumbent and a resting position. Sacrifice! Fourteen years ago I emptied a whole lot of dirt out of my pockets, and God filled them with diamonds. Think of me going around saying, “I had to give away a whole lot of dirt for diamonds.” Isn’t that a nice thing to give up? Isn’t that a sacrifice to make? I gave up dancing, I gave up dram-drinking, and I gave up profanity. I gave up everything that my preacher said was wrong. In place of that, joy and peace in this world, and an everlasting home in the world to come, are mine. Was that a sacrifice? Suppose I danced, drank, and enjoyed the world, and as I walked through the lurid flames of damnation with some poor, lost fellow like myself, I would say to him, “I could have gone to heaven, but I would not give up dancing. I am in hell forever, but I danced with more pretty girls, and drank more champagne, and had more fun than any man you ever saw.”

“I am wating for better terms. I am waiting until God lets the terms down, so I can curse a little when I get mad, and drink a little when I go fishing or at Christmas time, or when a snake bites me, dance a little and indulge in other worldly pleasures. In other words, I want to hold on to some of my devilment.” You remind me of the man in Atlanta who came up to me, and said, “Mr. Jones, I want you to tell me how I can stop drinking. I just drink and drink, and I believe I am going to kill myself in this way.” I said, “Brother, I know of but one way to quit, and that is to trust in God, and quit.” He said,

"O Mr. Jones, I don't want to quit that way. I want to fix myself so I can take two or three drinks of whiskey a day."

I like this "no-fence" law they have in Georgia. Every man has to keep up his stock, and every farmer turns his stock out at his own risk. I like that in physical agriculture, but when it comes to religion, no "no-fence" law for me. I want God Almighty to make the kingdom of heaven with a ten-rail fence around it. I want the devil's folks fenced out. I don't want them turned loose with us. And I say to every man, "If you don't want to get up where you can get into the kingdom of God, just stay out. God knows I would not lower the standard one-half inch. I have to deny myself and struggle to the top of yonder hill, but blessed be God, when I have struggled on and on, and have pulled loads that would, at times, break me down, and have at times fallen down in the shafts, panting for breath, with shoulders sore, and have told God that I could not pull another inch, the good Lord has always been right there to pour His grace into my soul and the water of life over me, ever ready to say, "Get up, my child, and cast thy burden on Me."

God has helped me push up some of the steepest places, and He is my ever-present help in time of trouble. We must deny ourselves and take up our cross if we would have the recompense of reward. I expect to see enough in heaven the first hour I am there to pay for every sacrifice and all the suffering I have endured.

Waiting for better terms! There are churches in this country that will take you on any terms. Churches that will take you any way that is consistent with the attitude of the world. It reminds me of the woman praying for a husband, and an owl hooting in

the grove near the house, and the woman, thinking it was the Lord asking her "Who?" answered back, "Anybody, Lord." And there are many churches standing with their arms outstretched saying, "Give us anybody! Give us anybody!" Lord help us preachers, who claim to be religious, and to proclaim the gospel of religion, to protect the kingdom, and say, "Unless you deny yourself, and take up your cross, we cannot take you. We will not compromise the religion of our Lord and Saviour."

God help me! If I am a Baptist, I will be the best one I know how to be. If I am a Methodist, a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, I will be the very best one I know how to be. I will be what I profess to be, and what my religion demands that I should be.

I am waiting for better terms! I am waiting until they will take a fellow that is about halfway ready! That is what I am waiting for!

Another ~~man~~ says to ~~me~~, "I am not waiting for better terms. I have made the decision, and if I start, I want to be a good man. I do not want to be a hypocrite in the church. I am not waiting for time to consider. I am not waiting for better terms, but I am waiting for the church to get right." My brother, you will be in hell a million years before the church will be right. When Jesus was on earth, He chose twelve disciples for the foundation of our church. And of that twelve, one denied Him, one doubted Him, and one sold Him to His enemies. And in apostolic succession, I don't think you will find more than three bad ones out of every twelve, and I don't believe, while on this earth, that the Church of God will ever be free from traitors, and doubters, and deniers. I suppose it will be little consolation to you in hell to know, after many, many years, that the church has at last gotten right. Waiting for the

church to get right! You say the hypocrites are in your way. Do you know a man cannot be in your way unless he is ahead of you?—and whenever that crowd gets ahead of me, I know I have already stopped.

Brother, what have you and I got to do with the church? I used to stand on the outside and say, "I am as good as this one in the church. I am as good as that one." But I tell you I always picked out some lame, halting brother, who did not amount to much, when I made those comparisons. The devil used to worry me a great deal about the hypocrites in the church. He used to come up to me and point out the sorry little members that meant nothing to God or to the church, but one day I found out how to silence him. He had been asking me if I didn't know better men in the world than a certain weak brother in my church. The thought came to me as an inspiration from God. Take the devil and show him one of those grand old soldiers of the cross that are here in your town, one of the men of God that have weathered the storms of life, and who never falter in God's great work, and ask him if he has got anything like this grand old saint of God in the world. Since that time the devil has not worried me on that line.

If there is a disgusting sight in this world to me, it is to see a man calling himself a gentleman, a moral man, out in the world, who goes out and drags one of those little, old, lame dwarfs in the church, out into the road and stretches himself out by his side and says, "I am going to measure this fellow, and show you I am longer than he is." And after he has lain down and measured himself by the dwarf he jumps up and says, "Don't you see I am bigger than this fellow in the church?" Why don't you take a first-class Christian and lie down by his side and take

your own measure? I tell you, you would look like a rat terrier lying by the side of an elephant. The fact of the business is, we have got some sorry members; but did you ever think about it, we got them from your side. We have never been able to do very much with them. But I feel that it is largely due to your influence from the outside that they have not developed into just the members of the Church of God that they should have. The reason we have never been able to do anything with them, is because they are so much like you. And is it not strange that you should put a few of your sort on us, and then make it a reason why you will not come into the Church of God, and live right?

Here you are waiting for the church to get right! And I say to you, it is largely your fault that the church is not already right.

Here is a father who is a farmer, he has four sons. He is going off on a journey, and he says, "Bill, John, Henry, and Tom, I am going away, and I am going to leave the farm and my affairs in your keeping. I want you to put this field in corn, this in cotton, and sow this land in wheat." After leaving full directions, the father goes off on his journey. A few days after he leaves, Bill and Tom say to John and Henry, "Come on, now, let's begin this work father left for us to do." John and Henry say, "We don't think we will begin at all, for if we don't begin, we will not be under obligations to continue." The two other boys sow their wheat, go on and plant the crop as best they can, and about the middle of June the grass begins to get the upper hand of the crop. The two idle boys get up on the fence in the shade and say to the two boys who are hard at work, "Look at your crop, boys! Seems to me like the grass is growing faster than anything else. Your cotton and

corn are full of weeds. We would be ashamed to have such a crop." The two working boys reply, "John, you and Henry know that father told you as well as us to work in this crop. We have done the best we could, and yet we could not do your part, and our own part, too. You boys get off the fence and help us get rid of the grass, instead of sitting there criticising us."

Now, old fellow, you get down off the fence and come into God's vineyard and go to work with us for Him. He told you to work in His vineyard just as He told me, and He has a work for each one of us to do, and unless we do that work, it remains undone. No one can do our work for us, and that work, you may be sure, is not to criticise.

But another man says, "I am not waiting for the church to get right. The Lord knows the church is too good for me as it is. I'll tell you what I'm waiting for. I am waiting for feeling. As soon as I have feeling, I'll tell you plainly, I am going into the church."

You remind me of the man who stands on the roadside, with his back against a large tree on a frosty morning, with his axe resting against his knee. I walk up to him and say, "Good-morning, my friend, what are you going to do?" He replies, "I am going to cut down this tree." "Why don't you get at it?" I ask him. "I'm waiting till I begin to sweat." "Why don't you begin to cut and then you'll begin to sweat?" He says, "I am not going to cut a lick until I begin to sweat," and stands there and freezes to death. What would you do with a fellow like that? Feeling, in a spiritual sense, is what perspiration is in a physical sense. Both come from activity. You say to me, "If I come up and join the church, and don't feel like doing it, I will be a hypocrite. If

I do a thing without feeling like doing it, I am a hypocrite." That's the way you talk.

Look here, doctor, when you were sent for at midnight the other night, you had been at work all day, and had lost a great deal of sleep for several nights. When the summons came, to go to a very sick patient, you got up and rubbed your eyes and said, "Wife, I declare I don't feel like going." But you got out of bed, dressed yourself, went to see the patient, and relieved the suffering. Were you a hypocrite? You did not feel like going, but you went like a true man, and did your duty. Were you a hypocrite?

Sister, when you got up this morning, you did not feel like getting up, much less like going to the kitchen and cooking breakfast for your husband and children and getting the children off to school. But you got up anyway, and went on to your work the best you could. Were you a hypocrite? No, I say a thousand times, No! You deserved a great deal more credit for getting up and doing the thing that seemed so hard to do, than you would had you felt like doing it.

Why can't we have as much sense in religious matters as we have in all other matters? A fellow running on feeling, reminds me of a man who took a trip, and when he returned his neighbour called to him and asked if he had had a pleasant trip. He replied, "Yes, I had a very pleasant trip, but within about ten miles of my destination I became very sick." Well, the next week this other man finds he has got to take a trip to the same city. He gets on the right train, passes the right stations, but when he gets within ten miles of the city, the conductor passes through the train and the man asks him to stop the train and put him off. "What's the matter?" the conductor asks. "I am not on the right road to take

me to the city where I am going." "What makes you think you are not?" asks the conductor. The man answers, "I have a friend who went to this city last week, and he was taken sick ten miles before he got there, and I am certain we are not on the right road, or I would have become sick when I got to that place." So many men expect to get what they see some one else has! Now, what are you going to do with a fellow like that, a fellow who is running on feeling! If you were to start him to the city, about every ten minutes he would say, "I don't feel like I'm going there." That is the man that is running on feeling. Oh, how I wish we could see and keep in mind the sensible view of all these things that God intended we should.

"I am waiting for feeling! I am not going to do a thing until I get feeling." Well, now, if that's what you want, I can prescribe for you, and I can bring out feeling on you before ten o'clock in the morning. Here's old Brown, he stole a sheep last night. Yonder it is in his pen to-day. He stole it from Smith, and he goes out and sees that the sheep is in the pen, and knows that he stole it, and says, "I know I stole that sheep. I know it was not right, and if I could just feel it was wrong to steal that sheep, I would take it back. I would take it back in a minute, if I just had the right feeling, but I haven't got a bit of feeling." I say to him, "You thief, I'll get you up some feeling if you really want it." He asks me how, and I reply, "It's out all over the settlement that you stole the sheep last night, and the whole community knows it, and knows it is now in your pen. Now, old fellow, it's broad daylight; you take that sheep on your shoulder and go down the big road with it till you get to Smith's, and tell him there's the sheep you stole from him last night, and tell him you are

sorry for it, and beg his pardon." "Will that get feeling?" Brown asks. "You do as I tell you, and if it don't I will pay you for your trouble."

Old Brown shoulders the sheep, and takes it down the big road, and when he passes Johnson's house, Johnson's wife is in the yard, and she says, "O husband, there's old Brown carrying that sheep back that he stole from Smith. Yonder he goes, do you see him?" And old Brown hears that and passes on by Mr. Green's house. And Mr. Green's little boy is out at the front gate, and he sees him and says, "O mamma, run here; here goes old Brown with that sheep of Mr. Smith's on his shoulder. He is taking it back." And Brown hears that, too. And by and by, he walks up to Smith's house, and Smith and his wife are sitting on the front porch, and he walks up to the front step, and lets the sheep down and says, "Mr. Br-br-brown, h-h-here's y-y-your sh-sheep."

He has got feeling now, God bless him. And if you want feeling, my brother, you go and confess that sin that you committed, go and take that sheep back, and you'll get it. If you want feeling, you go around the city in which you live, and try to undo the bad deed you have done, and you'll not go very far before you will feel in your heart, "I know I am the meanest man God ever made."

Oh, that we realized that we need principle, not feeling. Feeling is the lowest element in religion—away down, the ground stratum. Feeling! Principle! Those are the two things that move men, feeling and principle. I will show you the difference.

Here is feeling. There is a sailing ship, she starts out in a full breeze, under full sail. Watch her. She is going twelve miles an hour. She gets out into mid-ocean; the wind ceases, and there she lies for six

weeks. She does not move half a mile. What's the matter? No wind! She can move only when the wind blows. And what is principle? Look at that ocean steamer, she weighs anchor, and moves out. When the wind blows, she spreads her wings, and she is going fifteen miles an hour. By and by the wind ceases, the engineer pulls the throttle wide open, and she runs her fourteen knots an hour, whether the wind blows or not. That's principle, and I'll tell you, brother, a man cannot wait on feeling. I will do right, because it is right. I don't care whether the wind blows or not, I'm going to do right.

Principle is a firm resolution, which nothing can break, to do right, follow God, and land safe in the haven of eternal rest.

Another says, "I am not waiting for feeling. I'll tell you what I'm looking for. I am not fit to be religious. I am not fit to be a Christian. I am waiting to get fit," and he makes that a reason why he does not come to Christ. He does not know that his acceptance is the only thing that commends him to Christ. If he thought he was fit to come, Christ would not have him.

"He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

When it comes to the plea of want of fitness, the most intelligent lawyer, and the humblest coloured man are on the same level. You ask the most intelligent lawyer why he doesn't come into the church and serve God, and he says, "Because I am not fit." You ask the most ignorant coloured man the same question, and he replies, "I ain't fitten." So after all, the only difference between them is their grammar.

It reminds me of a poor fellow who is absolutely starving to death. A man walks up to him and takes him by the hand, and leads him into a room where the table is set for a meal. He asks the poor fellow if he is hungry, and he says, "I was never hungrier in my life." The friend tells him that there is a table laden with every luxury, and that he is to sit down and eat. But the man hesitates and says he cannot eat. When asked why, he says his hands are not fit. But you show him the soap, water, and towels and tell him to wash his hands, and he tells you they are not fit to be washed, and he stands there and starves to death. Now, what are you going to do with him? There is an old sinner out there, and I say, "Friend, come up and join the ranks of God to-day." But he says, "I am not fit." And when I ask him to come and get fit he says, "I ain't fitten to get fit," and stands there and starves to death spiritually, out of the kingdom of God.

Another man says, "I know I am not fit. I can see it, and my wife sees it, and my neighbours see it. My heart is harder now and my will is more obdurate than it was." The truth of the business is, there's no use in putting up such a story as that.

"If I tarry till I'm better,
I shall never come at all."

Bless God for this old hymn. For these two lines,

"All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel my need of Him."

All that is needed to secure a ticket to God's table, is the fact that you are hungry. The only thing that commends you to the outgushing waters of life, is the fact that you are thirsty.

Another man says, "A man ought not to talk about getting 'fit,' for the Lord knows we are all 'unfit.' And that's the reason we are where we are to-day. ~~But~~ I'll tell you what I'm waiting for: I am waiting till I get enough religion to take me through to heaven, before I start at all, for I'll tell you, I have seen the beginning and ending of so many religious lives, that I am afraid to start on so small a capital."

I have been right there many a time in my thoughts. Oh, how it troubled me to think I had joined the church, and might run well the Christian race for a while, like some men I had seen, and then quit. That bothered me a great deal, and that is a stumbling block to a great many men. You say, "Whenever I get religion enough to take me through before I start, then I am going to start. But I'm afraid to start, for fear I cannot hold out." Let me illustrate this for you. Down in Atlanta, Georgia, some years ago, I was going up to Cartersville, my home, fifty miles above Atlanta. Just before the train started, I walked out around the locomotive that was to pull the train to Cartersville, and as I looked at it I saw the engineer oiling up. Just before leaving time, the engineer looked up at the fireman and said, "Have you got steam enough to start with?" The fireman replied, "Yes." I peeped around and saw he had only seventy-five or eighty pounds of steam. I looked back at those six or eight coaches and looked at that steam gauge and thought, "This engineer, going to leave this city with one hundred and thirty-eight miles of up and down grade between here and Chattanooga, with eighty pounds of steam!" I knew the boiler would hold one hundred and eighty pounds pressure to the square inch, and I didn't know what that engineer meant. But in a minute or two he rolled the engine back, coupled on to the passenger

coaches and pulled out toward his destination. The bell rang, and the engineer pushed his lever forward and pulled his throttle open and the engine began to move. As we turned a curve, close to the Chattahoochee River, seven miles out of Atlanta, I put my head out and saw the safety valve blow out, and the engine was blowing off. She had more steam than she could hold. I said to myself, "The engineer never asked the fireman if he had steam enough to run to the river, seven miles, or to Marietta, twenty miles, or to Cartersville, fifty miles, or to Chattanooga, one hundred and thirty-eight miles, but he asked the fireman if he had enough steam to start with." After we moved on, I got to thinking, "Suppose that engine had stayed in Atlanta until she got steam enough to run to Cartersville, or to Chattanooga? He would have blown that engine into ten thousand pieces. But she started off with eighty pounds' pressure, and generated steam faster in running, than she could by standing still. And before we got seven miles out of the city, we had more steam than she wanted, and was blowing off at the safety valve." Hear me! You are waiting for religion enough to take you to heaven before you start, while all in the world you want is enough to start with, for the soul generates grace faster running toward heaven, than it does standing still. If God gave you enough religion for that—to take you to heaven at once—it would blow your little soul into ten thousand pieces.

All a man wants in this universe, is enough to start with. When I gave my heart to God, and started on a better life, I didn't have enough steam to start. I had to take a crowbar and pinch my way along for a few steps, but thank God, I got started, and began to move off. I had only gotten as far as the station of full surrender before the safety valve

flew open, and I was blowing off steam, and I was shouting the praise of God. I had more grace than I could hold. Thank God, we can generate steam faster running, than we can standing still.

Every one of us has grace enough to make a start. All that I had, was the sense that I was lost. I promised my dying father I would quit my sins and go with him to heaven. And that was all.

I ask you now, is it right for us to wait for time to consider, to wait until we can solve the mysteries of the Bible, to wait for better terms, to wait for the churches to get right, to wait for feeling, to wait till we are fit, or to wait until we can get enough religion to carry us clear through? Can't we make up our minds and say with the text, "What wait I for? My hope is in thee."

Thank God, my hope is in Him! If my hope was in stocks and bonds, and I had all the world could give, those stocks and bonds might take unto themselves wings and fly away from me, and then my hope would be gone forever. Suppose my hope was in my precious mother. For nearly thirty years, my mother has been buried away from the sight of human eyes. Suppose my hope was in my father, my father who has been buried so many years. Suppose my hope was in my wife; she has been all the world to me since the day God gave her to me, she has been a crutch under both my arms to hold me up, but suppose my wife should die and should be cut off from me in a minute, and my hope be gone forever. Suppose my hope was in my children. The time might come when I would kiss the cold lips of my last child in the world, and my hope would be gone forever. Suppose my hope was in preachers. The time might come, when every one of them would turn his back on me and forsake me, and then my hope would be

gone. Suppose my hope was in the church. The time might come when the church would drive me from her pews and forbid me to enter her doors, and then my hope would be vanished forever. Suppose my hope was in my friends around me. Those friends might depart and leave me.

But thank God! my hope is not in wife, nor children, nor neighbours, nor church, nor preachers, but I can say with the Psalmist, "My hope is in God." When I started, they said to me, "Old fellow, you are mighty weak." I said, "I know that, but my hope is in God." They said, "You will be tempted a thousand times." I replied, "I know that, but my hope is in God." They said, "You are as frail as a bruised reed, and you will have a thousand trials in your pathway." I said, "I know how frail I am, but my hope is in God." O brother, let God take your hand in His, and then all will be well for time and for eternity.

Do you know that a man is as strong as the thing that he commits himself to? If I commit myself to a paper box, to cross the Atlantic Ocean, as soon as the paper box gets wet and goes to pieces and goes down, I go with it. I am no stronger than the thing to which I commit myself.

But if I get into that grand old ocean steamer, all the strength in her, all the power of her boiler, all the comforts of her cabin, are mine, and I shall never go down till she goes down. If I commit myself to the arm of flesh, I am no stronger than the arm I commit myself to. But if I commit myself to God, I shall never go down until God goes down, blessed be His holy name. The man who puts his trust in God is as strong as God Himself. He can live like God, he can conquer like God, he can triumph like God, and he can live forever with God. And I bless His name,

that my hope is in Him. To have your hand in the hand of God, is not only a post of honour, but a post of safety. Think about this. Think on your way and say, "I know I have no strength of my own, but my hope is in God."

The cross of Jesus Christ is the grand remedial agency of the world. The gospel of the cross is but a succession of waggon shops, as you drive toward the new Jerusalem. Thirty years ago, I drove up under the shop at the cross on my old, broken-down waggon of humanity. I do not think my waggon could have rolled ten feet farther, until it would have gone all to pieces. I got up to the cross, and there, thank God! I was made new from top to bottom. When I looked at myself, I said, "Glory to God." I got into my waggon and drove off and said to myself, "I am safe from this world; I am safe for time and eternity." I drove off gladly. The first thing I knew, one of my front wheels went down in a rut, and the axle broke short off. I said, "Just look at that. I thought I was going to drive clear through to heaven, without any more trouble, and here I've broken an axle before I have gotten a mile from the shop." I thought I might just as well turn around and go back. No use for me to try to go to Glory. About the time I was going to give up, I looked to the side of the road, and there was a shop. A benignant workman glanced up and said, "What's the trouble?" Then he came out and saw that my axle was broken, and said, "I will put you in a new axle. I am running this shop in the interest of those going in the direction that you are going." When he had finished and I asked him what he charged, he said, "Not a cent, only be a little more careful how you drive." I said to him, "I am not going to break down any more," and drove off.

I hadn't gone a mile before I struck a grub, and "smash" went my wheel. I said, "Now look at that. I'll have to go back. I am the poorest driver in the world." I looked to the side of the road, and there was a shop, and the workman said, "Bring that wheel up here and I will put in every spoke and fix it for you." When I drove away, I thought, "Now I will be careful, and won't break down any more, for I am going to notice what I am doing." I didn't get more than a mile before I made a short turn, and "snap" went the tongue. "There's no use for me to try to go anywhere, for I break down so often," I said to myself in despair, but I looked up the road, and there was the shop. The workman said to me, "Bring the tongue to me and I will put it in again." He did so, and urged me to be careful.

It seems to me I have broken down a thousand times, and there hasn't been a day since I started that I haven't been in the shop for repairs. Sometimes I have driven along ten miles, and haven't broken anything, and never a sight of a shop. But then when I would come to a rough piece of road, the rougher the road the thicker the shops. Sometimes I got uneasy. I was afraid the shops wouldn't hold out. Some time ago, I walked up to the side of a dying Christian and said to him, "Brother, do the shops hold out?" He said, "Yes, glory to God, it hasn't been ten minutes since I was in the shop. I have gotten the last finishing touch I need to carry me into a better world." And thank God! I know I shall make the trip safely, for if the shops are as thick in the future as they have been in the past, I am going to drive this old, broken-down waggon of humanity into the kingdom of God, some of these days.

Blessed be God! No soul ever broke down out of sight of a shop along the way. Let us come to

God and roll our broken-down waggon of humanity into the shop of the cross, and have them made new, and then drive on and on, and some of these days we will leave these old waggon of humanity at the gates of heaven. When I get to heaven and my loved ones congratulate me on my trip, and my father says, "I am glad you kept your promise to me, and made the trip in safety," I shall tell them I had very little to do with it, and shall ask them to show me my Saviour, who sought me, a poor wandering sheep, and when He found me, poor, starved, and tired, and lost, He didn't scold me, He didn't upbraid me, He didn't take a club and beat me, but He came to me and put His arms around me, and brought me safe to the gates of heaven. Thank God, my hope is in Him, and He is strong enough to take care of me now and forever.

III

THE WAGES OF SIN

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—ROMANS vi : 23.

THERE are two questions that always come up naturally, and legitimately, and you might say inevitably, between employer and employee. There can be no such thing as contract for labour, without the asking and answering of these two questions. If you seek to employ a man for an hour, a day, or a year, the first question on his part will be "What kind of work do you want me to do?" And when this question is satisfactorily answered, there is another just as important, and that is, "What will you pay me for the work?" These two questions are at the basis of every contract for labour, and there can be no intelligent contract for labour until they are satisfactorily answered.

There are persons who boast of the fact that they were never employed by any one, that they never sustained the relationship of a hireling. They boast of the fact that they live under the freest government the world ever saw, whose very constitution guarantees to every man his life, his liberty, and his property. And yet there is a special sense in which we are all servants, and there is a very special sense in which we are all employed, and there is an awful sense in which payday is coming.

Now, whose servant am I? We will settle that easily and in a very short time. Our Saviour said,

"To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." And again He said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Then again, He said something that should bring conviction to every heart that hears it, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

The dividing line is so narrow that no man can stand on it. I am either on one side or the other. You often hear a man say, "I am not on either side. I am neutral. I am on the fence." But watch that man, and every time you see him get down, he gets down on the wrong side. Being neutral, reminds me of the old woman who, when asked to take sides on some moral question, said, "I am not going to take sides, I am going to be just plain nuisance." There are a great many men that will tell you if you ask them if they are bad men, "No!" If you ask them if they are good men, they will say, "No!" Neither good nor bad. They will say, "I am not fit for heaven, and I am not fit for hell, but my wife says I am the best man in town." If she knew you as God knows you, she would never tell you that again. Neither very good, nor very bad. What's going to become of all such characters?—for there are a good many of that sort in the world. Really, they are in the majority.

Hear me, my fellow-citizens, on that point. The man that is good enough to go to heaven is he that "believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ," and maintains

his faith by an upright life, and when a man does not believe unto the salvation of his soul he is guilty of the only sin that ever damned a soul—that of unbelief in the only begotten Son of God.

There are two characters in every community that I have been in, that are a puzzle to the community. One character is that member of the church who will pray in public, pray in his family, and do anything the church wants him to do. Pays liberally, but won't treat his fellow-man right and won't pay his debts. He seems to do everything that God wants him to do, and to treat God right, but he will not treat his neighbour right. Here is another man, standing by his side. He is not a member of the church, does not profess to know God, and yet he is a just man, pays his debts, is generous to the poor, and seems to be, all in all, a good citizen. Well, there the two stand in the balance in their community. A large part of the community stand and look at these two characters and say, "I had rather be that man out of the church who is just and generous and pays his debts, than to be that man in the church who mistreats his neighbours." The puzzle to me is, why they want to be like either one. I don't, I assure you, and by the grace of God, I don't intend to be like either one. I am going to do right by God and by my fellow-man, for God has said, that the man who is an enemy to his neighbour is not a true friend to God. A half man! A half man! He will do right toward his neighbours, but won't do right toward God; he will do right toward God, but won't do right toward his neighbour.

Now, my friends, I say in all love and kindness, if you are either of these characters, I do not want to be like you, I care not which character you represent. God helping me, I want to do right toward God

and toward my fellow-man, and after all, when you ask one of these men, "Shall you go to heaven when you die?" he says, "I don't think so." "Will you go to hell?" and again he says, "I hardly think so." And this sort of man will necessitate some sort of third universe, or world, in eternity. Neither fit for heaven nor hell. Not bad enough to go to hell and not good enough to go to heaven. And here these two characters are, and they have been to God and their community, all their lives, in just such an attitude as this. But I want to say to you, there are no neutral grounds. You are either on one side or the other.

I recollect once at a camp-meeting, a gentleman approached me and said, "I am mighty glad to see this grand work going on here. I hope the whole community will be saved." After thanking him, I asked him what church he belonged to. He said, "I don't belong to the church, but I am a Christian." I said to him, "You a Christian, and do not belong to any church. You are the man I have been looking for for many years. I have offered a reward, a large one, for one of your sort. Christians are sort o' scarce in the church, and I didn't know there was one outside the church. I have found an anomaly in the universe of God, a Christian out of the church. I am mighty glad to meet you, and this afternoon, when I call up penitents, I am going to call on you to pray for them."

He said, "Oh, no, I cannot pray in public." "Why?" I asked him. "Because I am not a member of the church," he said. "Then," I said, "when the service is over this afternoon, take one of the penitents out from the altar and go out in the woods and pray with him." "Oh, no, I cannot do that," he said. "And why?" I asked. "Because I am not a member of the church." "Well, can't you take one of the boys by the arm, and take him out and talk to him about

Christ?" "No, my trouble is, I am not a member of the church." "No, sir," I said, "that's not your trouble. Your trouble is, you belong to the devil from hat to heels. And he is making you believe you are on the Lord's side. I wouldn't go to hell, if I were you, believing a lie."

I have a contempt for a man who imagines he is good enough to go to heaven, and yet is going to hell every step of his life. Some men lay claims to morality, and say, "I am a moral man. I am a moralist." Do you know what a moral man is? He is nothing under God's heaven but a whitewashed rascal. That's all you can make out of him. All that is beautiful and lovely about him is on the outside. You say, "You ought not to say that." Our Saviour said the same thing. He looked in the face of the most moral men, outwardly, the world ever saw, and called them "whited sepulchres." If you were dead, you would be a "whited sepulchre," but as you are living and kicking, you are nothing but a whitewashed rascal. That's the difference precisely.

Do you know the difference between an immoral man and a moral man? I will tell you. It is right at this point. It is the difference between smallpox and typhoid fever. Smallpox is the immoral man. It broke out all over him, and you can see it ten steps from him. The moral man has a case of typhoid fever. It is internal. That is where his disease is; outwardly it does not show. The moral man says, "I pay my bills, I don't cheat anybody," and yet, in the next breath he will tell you that it is impossible for an honest man to make a living under the conditions that exist in our country to-day.

I never separate morals and Christianity. They belong together, and "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." If a man is a moral man,

he is a Christian man, and if he is not a Christian, he cannot be a moral man. No man can keep the law of God without the power of Christianity behind him to help him.

"He that is not with me is against me." There is no neutral ground. Every Christian man has his banner and his weapon, and he is out in the front ranks, fighting for his cause.

Whose servant am I? "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are." Now let us settle this question, each one for himself. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Do you do that? You say, "No." And He said again, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Have you done that? Again you say, "No." "Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me." Again I ask you, have you done that? And again you say, "No."

Well, that settles the question without any more cavil, that you are not the servant of the Lord God, and if you are not a servant of the Lord God Almighty, there is only one alternative, you are the servant of the devil. Every man that walks this earth is a loving, cheerful servant of God, or he is a servant of the devil, one or the other. Now, will the man who serves the devil go up and ask him what kind of work he has for him to do? He wants you to profane the name of God, he wants you to debauch your body with whiskey, to rebel against God, to do ten thousand things to lower you in the estimation of your wife, of your children, and of your community. He wants you to steal, he wants you to get drunk, he wants you to do the things that are disreputable and that dishonour God, and that will doom and finally damn your soul forever. Isn't that true? I can prove that by many thousand souls in this coun-

try. Oh, the disreputable work the devil puts a man at. I have heard men say, "I am not going to join any church, and have a preacher lording it over me. I am a free man." Yes, you are free! Free to get drunk, free to tell lies, free to cheat and swindle, and free to deceive. You are "powerful free," you are, and I never come within ten steps of you that I do not hear the devil's chains rattling. You belong to the devil's chain-gang. Thank God! no freedom like that for me. God does not license any man to do wrong. Liberty does not license any man to be wicked. The freest man in the world is the man that loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself.

Whose servant am I? And if I am a servant of the devil, what kind of work does he want me to do? The devil wants a man in his employ to do everything that will degrade him in time and through eternity. Am I right? Does the devil want you to do these things? He not only wants you to do these things, old fellow, but he has had you doing them for years. That pale-faced, sad-eyed wife of yours tells the tale stronger than any preacher could tell it, of the sort of work the devil has had you at. The devil is like some of the big slave-owners we used to have in the South. He had "preferred slaves." Those who ate at the white folks' table after they had finished, those who drove the carriages and wore the stove-pipe hats, and they would sort o' crow over the other negroes, and wouldn't mix with them. The devil has a lot of "preferred servants." He has a lot of them in this country. My! My! And they live in big houses, ride in fine carriages, have boxes at the theatre, and have the biggest kind of a time. The devil is fattening them, and the fattening hog "dunno what he's eatin' corn for." Whenever one of those

rich old slave-owners broke, he always put those preferred slaves on the block, just as he did the rest, and, my friend, the day is coming when the devil will put you down in the same hell as he puts the balance of the low-down sinners.

And, oh, the disreputable work the devil has got the poor, lost women of this country at. O God, save the country from the pollution and evil influences of these fallen and degraded lives, that not only stand debauched, but defile everything with which they come in contact.

There are thousands of sinners living and thousands in eternity that are witnesses to the truth that the devil will ruin them on earth, and damn them through eternity.

Then if I am to do such disreputable work as this, and engage in such employment, what are to be my wages? Woe, misery, and anguish on earth, and damnation in the end. Is that true? Yes, and payday is coming. It has come to millions, and is coming to millions more.

Preaching once in my own home church, on a line of thought like this, I turned to an old grey-headed sinner, sitting on my left, and said to him, "There you are, after sixty-odd years' service with the devil, and I wish you would get up and tell this congregation your wages for the sixty-five years of sinful bondage? The old man twisted and turned in his pew, and the next day he met me on the road and said, "Mr. Jones, when you put that question to me, if I had stood up and told the plain truth, it would have frightened every man that heard it. I can tell you now, sir, that for sixty-five years of sinful bondage, all that I have to show for it in this world is the most godless family in this settlement, a hard heart, a stiff neck, and a rebellious soul. And no assurance at all, that I

shall ever be saved." And, oh, when a man sixty-five years of age reaches a point where his stock in trade forces him to make a confession of that kind, it is enough to frighten a man who has gone no farther than some of you men.

Then again, if I be a servant of the Lord God, and, thank God, He has many servants, the question comes up, what does the Lord want me to do? He wants me to love mercy, to do justly, and to walk humbly before Him. He wants me to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and to bear the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith, and He wants me to stick to the true, the beautiful, the good, and to the things that are of good report. He wants me to work diligently and righteously, and speak the truth in my heart. He wants me to do the things that will make my wife think more of me, that will make my neighbours think more of me, and my children think more of me.

He wants His servants to do things that will honour them in time and eternity. He wants them to do the things that will ultimately bring them to a safe and everlasting rest, in the world of peace and bliss.

Now, if this is true, and the Lord wants us to serve Him gladly, and serve Him joyfully, and there is nothing the Lord wants us to do that in doing will not make a better merchant, a better farmer, a better lawyer, a better doctor, a better everything and anything—for religion is the best thing on earth to mix with life, and there is nothing better in heaven than pure, undefiled religion—then what is my pay for this service?

There are seemingly hard things we have to do for Christ, but I honour Him, that this declaration is true, I have done some seemingly hard things for Him, but

the hardest thing I ever did for Christ was the thing that made me most like Him when I got through. He that sweats and toils and suffers for Christ, shall have flagons of joy and rivers of pleasure for every tear and pang that he ever suffered.

Again you say, if it is such delightful service that I am to render in the employ of God, what am I to be paid? Brother, He gives us cash enough to live on every day, and when we are old and wrinkled, and grey-headed, and can work no longer, He comes down and picks us up in His loving arms and carries us home to live with Him forever. Is that true? Yes, true as heaven. Then I stop and ask myself the question, "If these things are true and the world knows they are true, isn't it strange that a man will serve the devil for a single moment, when it is his precious privilege to go into the employ of the Lord God Almighty? Why is it that every man in the world is not a servant of God? Why is it that there is a servant of the devil in the universe? If the devil wants to employ me in disreputable and degrading service, and it is misery and anguish here, and damnation in eternity for my wages, and God gives me delightful, joyous employment, and helps me build a character that will stand the tests of judgment, and finally takes me home to heaven to mansions especially prepared for me, a saved man, saved forever—and if one is true, the other is true—why is it that there is a servant of the devil in all this broad land? The devil's economy is to give the best that he has first, and then it gets worse through all eternity.

To illustrate, and I always could illustrate a thing better than I could argue it. When I was ten or twelve years old, the devil took me up into a capacious palace, a magnificent structure it was, beautiful, and glorious in all of its architectural sym-

metry. He carried me into the palace, and led me around through the rooms, and I looked upon and worshipped the pictures hanging around on all the walls, and then I looked at the beautiful carpets on the floors and at the beautiful curtains at the windows, and there was a table of pleasure, a chair of ease, and a sofa of contentment. And, oh, how many thousand things in that palace charmed my heart.

Then the devil said to me, "If you will be my servant, all this is yours." And I surveyed those beautiful surroundings in that wonderful palace, and said, "If all this is mine, what do I care for God and heaven and everlasting life? I will enter your service." And I took possession of that palace of sin.

I remained there, joyfully, for several days; but one day I walked out, and when I returned, I saw my chair of ease was gone, and somehow or other I never felt so easy in there afterwards as I had before that time. I returned another day, and my sofa of contentment was gone, and I never felt so contented there afterwards. I came back another day, and found my table of pleasure was gone, and I never found any more pleasure in that palace. Another day, I found one of those beautiful windows had been removed, and a solid wall had been placed in its stead, and I said, "It is not quite so light as it once was." I came back another day, and a beautiful picture had been removed, and how blank and dreary that space looked. Another day, and another window was gone, and it was perceptibly darker to me. Soon a door had been removed, and I said, "There are not so many ways of ingress and egress now as there once were."

On and on, until by and by the last picture was gone, the last window had been removed, and, oh, how dark and gloomy was my home! The carpets had all been taken up, and how bare and cold was the

floor! Soon another door was removed, and another, until the last door had been removed except one. The windows had all been taken away, and everything was gone, and, oh, how desolate!

Thank God! soon after that, I walked out of that palace to see my father die, and before he died, I promised him I would never go back any more. But I knew a man who stayed just a little longer than I. He was a friend of mine. He stayed until the last piece of furniture was gone, every window removed, and all the doors taken out. He said to me, "I cannot escape from this place, the walls are coming closer together every day." And one night about one o'clock, his wife stood by his bedside when the walls of the palace, now desolate and empty, crushed together, and he said with his dying breath, "The wages of sin is death." Oh, what a picture of human life!

I can remember when the devil lured me from the blessed influences, and how he led me into the bar-room where I took my first drink. How manly it made me feel! I thought, "Surely I have found the elixir of life, the panacea of all sad feelings"; but I drank on and on, until I despised myself and loathed my very being, because I was a miserable drunkard. I remember the first oath I ever swore. I thought it sounded manly, but I cursed and swore until I was a black-mouthed villain and I despised myself when I came into the presence of a Christian gentleman.

And so with every sin. It seemed to have its pleasure and enjoyment, but I found that Burns told the truth, when he said,

"Pleasures like the poppies spread,
You seize the flower, the bloom is dead;
Or like the snowfall in the river,
A moment white, then melts forever."

Oh, how the devil cheated me, and wronged me for twenty-three years of my life, week after week, day after day! Oh, how I thank God for the blessed influences that cut the ligaments which bound me to him, and made me a free man to serve God and do right the balance of my days!

Sinner, you cannot know what freedom is, until you bid adieu to the miserable cage the devil has had you in so long. I have often thought of the eaglet which was captured by a hunter while young and put into a cage. The doors of the cage were shut upon it. It pined and pined away, until finally its feathers ruffled up and seemed to turn the wrong way. It drooped and seemed utterly lifeless in its imprisonment. One day the hunter saw that his eaglet was doomed if he kept it caged. He went to the cage, opened the door, and took the eaglet and carried it to a prominent knoll, and then stood there and saw the eaglet, as it looked at the cage from which he had taken it, then turned its eyes to the top of the mountain peaks. Its feathers commenced smoothing down, and it seemed to straighten itself, as if to find out if its strength had gone. It turned its eyes to the cage, and saw its old prison home, then turned to the distant mountain top, and raised its wings as if to try them. Its feathers lay flat, and it seemed to poise itself on its wings, and then, looking at the cage, it seemed to whisper, in the language of an eaglet, "Good-bye, imprisonment; good-bye, days of sadness and gloom," as it flew off toward the distant peaks; and as it went the hunter heard its shrill voice as if saying, "Farewell, cage, imprisonment, long confinement, dreariness, and death; farewell. I am through," and on it sped on its way, until it touched the highest peak, and realized and said to itself, "I am as free as any bird in the universe."

Thirty years ago, God Almighty opened the door of the miserable cage of sin, where the devil had shut me in. I came out and looked towards it, and then looked at the sunlit heights of the city of God, and though I was weak and wounded and my nature all reversed and ruined, I said to myself, "God helping me, I will make those steeps, I will climb those heights." Then I said, "Farewell, imprisonment, dreary days, and heartaches, and miserable experiences, I am going higher and higher and higher." And on and on I have gone, until to-day, blessed be God, I am closer to God than I have ever been before. And when I walk through the pearly gates, I shall bid an everlasting farewell to everything that ever harmed a soul or misled a human being, free forever, in the city of God, to walk and shout His holy name.

O my friend, I tell you that sin has its sweetest, richest ingredients at the top of the cup, but as you go down and down and down, the bitterest drink that a human being has to swallow, is the last dregs of a sinner's life. Some of you know this is true. The devil offers and gives the best first, and it gets worse and worse through all eternity. There is not a sinner twenty-five years old, but will realize in eternity that he saw more pleasure in his life of sin, up to twenty years of age, than in all his life after that time.

Lord Byron was a man who drank of every cup that earth could give him, and had an intellectual and physical nature that could dive down into the deepest depths, and could soar to the highest peaks, whose wings of genius, when spread, could touch either pole; and yet that poor man, just before he died, sitting in the gay company of his friends, was meditative and moody. They looked at him and said, "Byron, what are you thinking of so seriously?" He replied,

"I was counting the number of happy days I have had in this world." Some one asked, "How many do you make it?" He said, "I can count but eleven, and I have been wondering if I could ever make it a dozen in this world of tears and sorrow." He went into depths that you know nothing of, and to heights that you, perhaps, will never reach.

Many of you are reaching the point, like the great character in England, who was sitting in contemplation when his friend said to him, "What are you thinking of?" He said, "I was sitting here looking at my dog, and wishing in my heart that I were he." There are depths to which humanity can go, that we loathe and despise, and yet these things promise us everything in the beginning.

But, thank God, there is another side of the picture! The first thing the Lord gives to a man is the bitterest cup he has ever swallowed up to that hour, the cup of conviction. When David took it and drank it down, he said, "The pains of hell gat hold upon me." He found trouble and sorrow and his very knees smote together, and, oh, what anguish and pain he felt! There is no experience in all the universe of God, like the experience of a soul in the deepest hour of its spiritual anguish. And this cup that God presents to the honest soul, the cup of conviction, oh, how it makes his knees smite together, and, oh, what wormwood and gall it is! I can never forget the hours in my life when I turned this world loose, and had no God to take my hand. For nearly a week I went through the deepest despair and trials. I had turned loose all my sins, but I was continually reaching out my hand and saying, "Father, take my hand."

The next cup was the cup of regeneration, and when I drank it, I said with David, "Glory to God.

He took my feet out of the miry clay and put them on the rock, and put a new song in my mouth, and I will praise the Lord at all times."

O brother, it gets better and better! I shall never forget the time that God gave me the cup of conviction. It was the bitterest cup I ever tasted. But, thank God, it was the kind of bitter that made everything else taste sweet, from that day to this. And it gives a sweetness to every cup that God has given me from that time to this, and I want to say to you, after thirty years of experience, religion gets better and better every day. Religion is the best thing on earth, and there is nothing better in heaven. Better and better and better, and still there is more to follow. It is good for the soul, good for the body, good for time, and good for eternity. It is good for me as a father, it helps me as a husband, it's a blessing to me as a citizen, and it is glorious to me as an individual. I am so glad I drank of the first cup God presented, and turned my back on the devil, and utterly refused to work for him another day. Thank God! I will praise Him forever, for my deliverance from bondage.

Ah, me! I have thought many a time over my past life, how I used to see my father's and our neighbour's slaves hard at work, and I have wondered sometimes since if those poor negroes did not often look toward the North Star and say, "I wish I was a thousand miles north of here, where I might be a free man, for I long for freedom, and I desire freedom above everything else." Sometimes one of the Southern slaves would leave his home without a pair of shoes, or without a coat or a hat, and he would go by night through the woods and wilderness, and he would lie in a hollow tree without one morsel to eat. When you met the half-starved negro and said to him, "Friend, what is the matter with you?"

he would answer, "I long for one hour of liberty before I die. I want to reach the soil where I can stand up and say, 'I am as free as the air I breathe.'" and on and on he pressed his way until his foot struck the soil that guaranteed his liberty. Then he would look at his bleeding feet, and think of his coatless back and hatless head and say, "One hour of liberty here, and I am ready and willing to die."

O brother, brother, as I look at men all over this country, I say to myself, "Poor old slaves, slaves of sin, slaves of the devil, do you ever long for liberty? Do you ever long for a freeman's place among the people of God?" Poor old man, hatless and shoeless you may be, but glory to God, you can strike out for Calvary, where the shackles burst from the prisoner, and you will become a free man in the Lord.

I am a knight of labour, and I thank God that I am. I am one of the old knights and I belong to the company of free men. I want to get up a strike against the devil in this country. I want to set every man free. We have got our labour strikes, we have the contest between labour and capital in this country; with monopolies on one side and labour on the other, they will fall out occasionally and men will strike. I have known men to strike when their wages were cut down ten cents a day. I have known them to strike by the thousands when cut down five cents, but, oh, how many thousand men the devil has in his employ, and he is taking the wages that ought to feed their wives and young children. God bless you, let's strike on him! Oh, for a universal strike on the devil. Oh, for the last man to tell him, "I have worked for you my last day."

"The wages of sin is death." But listen! "the gift of God is eternal life." But, brother, you can't earn what God gives you. It is so immeasurably above

your deserts and all that you can do for Him, that God doesn't call it wages, He calls it a gift. "The gift of God is eternal life."

I want to say to you, religion gives more margin than everything else in this world put together. We hear a great deal about margins on this and that, but let me tell you, a man may walk right up and empty the dirt and ashes out of his pockets and as soon as they are empty, God fills them with diamonds. It's exchange of ashes for diamonds; it's the exchange of the perishable for the imperishable; it's the exchange of earthly things for heavenly things; it's all margin! it's all margin!

In the honourable service of God, there is manhood and womanhood, eternal riches and everlasting life, there is character, there is eternal life.

With these two illustrations that came right under my own eyes, as a pastor, I leave this great subject with you, and may they be the means of getting up such a strike against the devil as will make the angels fly back to heaven, with the news that will make all heaven rejoice.

"The wages of sin"—is death. The first pastorate I ever had was a circuit, and within two miles of where one of my churches stood, and where I lived, there was a man residing who was the most godless man in all that section of country. He was a guerilla during the Civil War, and a very desperate character. He always said he would give ten dollars to tear down a church where he would give one to build up one, or to help the people. He said that he would give one dollar to run a preacher out of a neighbourhood before he would give five cents to help take care of one. If the devil ever had a faithful servant on this earth, it was this man. He died while I was pastor there. The afternoon before he

died his wife stepped into the room noiselessly, and as he seemed to be asleep, she turned to go out; but as she turned, he called her, and said, "Wife, I have had the most horrible dream of my life." "What was it?" she asked. "It seemed to me a moment ago that I was out on the edge of an old waste field, helpless and ruined and powerless to move; and all at once I heard the most beautiful strain of music and the sweetest songs, and I turned my eyes toward it, and I saw ten thousand angels, winging their way right toward me. When they came near enough to see me distinctly, to see who I was, they wheeled their course and went out of sight. Just then the most hideous devils and demons, with noises that pierced through every nerve and fibre of my body, came closer and closer, until they pounced upon me, and were dragging me to hell, when I waked up and called to you a moment ago."

That night at one o'clock, in horrible delirium, he said, "O wife, wife, drive those devils out of the room. Don't let them drag me down to hell before my spirit leaves the body," and he breathed his last begging his wife to drive the devils away from his pillow.

May God have mercy upon men that serve such a master all their days, and then are dragged down to hell and death at last.

But right opposite, in another direction, lived the sweetest-spirited, Christian woman. Oh, what a benediction she was to my church! She had been suffering with tuberculosis for several years, and had spent two or three winters in Florida. But that summer, when I was her pastor, she was beyond the help of the balmy atmosphere of the land of sun and flowers, and was waiting for her Lord to come. Oh, how often I have visited that sickroom. The next

to the last visit I ever paid to her, she said to me, as I sat by her invalid-chair, "My pastor, I dread to die; not that death can harm me, for death is the gate to endless joys, but I am so frail and weak and so timid, that I dread to grapple with the monster." I said, "My sister, God will give you dying grace and see you gloriously through. Don't trouble about that, for

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
When on His breast we lean our head,
And breathe our life out sweetly there."

I cheered her all I could. The next time I visited her, and it was the last time before she passed away, she motioned all the company to go out of the room, and when they had all walked out of the room, she looked at me and said, "Pastor, I am not afraid to die now."

And I said, "What has come over your spirit?" "Oh," she said, "I will tell you, but I want you to promise me you will never mention it while I live, for the world makes light of such things, but what I say to you now is sacred to me." I promised her I would never mention it while she lived, and then she said,

"Yesterday, I was lying here on my bed, and I put my handkerchief over my face and I was thinking of heaven. All at once, it seemed to me that I was sitting on the moss-covered banks of a beautiful river, and the clear, sparkling water was rolling noiselessly by, and all at once a little boat ran its prow out toward me, and a cherubic oarsman invited me on board. I stepped into the little boat, and it moved off gently, amid the chants of angels and the songs of the redeemed. I left the boat, and they led me along a beautiful avenue to a great palace. As we

came up to it, the door stood ajar and they carried me in. I felt like a stranger in a strange place, but when they introduced me to the King of the palace, as my eyes looked upon Him, I recognized Him as the world's Redeemer, my precious Saviour, and I began to praise Him for my deliverance, and then I was at home in heaven. And, oh, now I am not afraid to die."

A few more hours passed. Her husband was sitting near her, and she motioned to him. He walked up to her, and she said, "O husband, I feel so sweetly, so delightfully strange. What is this strange feeling?" He felt her hand and her arm. It was cold to her body, and he said, "O wife, wife, you are dying!" And she clasped his neck, imprinted a last kiss of love, and said, "If this is death, what a glorious thing to die!" And she fell back on her pillow and never breathed again. She is the only one from whom I have had testimony that they were on the shining shore.

Just eleven days after that, the husband of this wife called to me, as I passed his door, and he said, "Our little Annie (the only child of that mother, just ten years old) is very ill. Won't you come in and see her?" I said, "Yes; I didn't know she was sick."

"Yes, the doctors have almost lost hope of her life." I walked in, and as I did so, the father said, "Darling, here is Mr. Jones, your mother's pastor." (The father was an infidel.) The bright-eyed, sweet darling looked at me, and motioned me to walk up close to her. I did so, and said to her, "Darling, do you want me to talk to you?" "Yes, Mr. Jones." I said, "What about?" "Talk to me about heaven." And I stood over that child and told her of heaven, that it was a bright world, where mamma lived; where

she would live with God and the angels. And the eyes of little Annie fairly danced like diamonds in her head, as I talked to her. In a moment or two, the doctors came in, and her father said, "Darling, the doctors want to cauterize your throat; they want to burn your throat again." And she looked up and said in a whisper, "O papa, please don't let them burn my throat again. It won't do any good. Mamma's been calling me all the morning and I want to go."

"O darling," he said, "if you go papa won't have any little girl. Won't you stay with papa?" "Well, let them burn it, but it won't do any good," she replied.

And they took the cruel caustic and burned her throat, and she didn't wince. When the doctors got through, she motioned to her father and said, "Papa, will you meet me in heaven?" He fell prostrate on the bed by his dying child, and wept profusely.

Just at that time, four of little Annie's Sunday-school friends walked in, for it was Sunday morning and they were on their way to Sunday school. She spoke to them and they kissed her, and then she whispered to them and said, "Won't you sing, 'Shall we gather at the river?'"

When they were singing the chorus after the first verse, the spirit of little Annie left the little pile of clay, and went home to live with mother and God forevermore.

O God, let me live the life of the righteous, and die their happy death; may my last end be like theirs. No people in the world die as Christians do. Thank God, we may all live the life, and we may all die the death, of the righteous.

IV

WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT?

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—MARK viii : 36-37.

CHRIST was pre-eminently a practical preacher. He did not discuss dogmas or metaphysics. To the farmer He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man going out to sow his seed." To the fisherman, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net let down into the water." To the carpenter, "Take heed how ye build." To the housewives, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." To the business man, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

This question was never more pertinent and practical than to-day. "What shall it profit?"

We are a nation of bargain seekers. Even the little boys swap marbles on the streets, and the little girls swap dolls and toys. Every fellow is running on profit and loss. "How much will I make by this, and how much will I lose by this?" Really, we have reached the point in America to-day, where this is the pivotal question. You can't get a congressman or a senator to speak on anything or any subject, but what he brings in the subject of tariff. And, oh, how he rears and pitches and prances about on the question of tariff, and taxes, and revenue. The tariff is

the biggest question to-day in the American Congress. And I'll tell you another thing: if a man's daughter is going to marry, he has quit taking the measure of the intended son-in-law, but just measures his pocket-book, and his capacity for making money. And I'll tell you another thing: we have gotten down to where, if we want a first-class contribution at church, we have got to pitch in and prove, beyond all doubt, that God will give two for one. Then my! my! how they will fill the basket!

It is strange that while science and philosophy have been busying themselves so much with the doctrines and dogmas of Christianity, they have never thought of how much good they would do this world if they would stop all that and begin to answer a few questions of the New Testament Scriptures.

Oh, what a vast benefit science and philosophy would be to humanity if they would answer just this one question:

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Did you ever see an attempt on the part of any man to answer this question? Did you ever see a philosopher trying to work out this problem:

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

If you notice the questions propounded by man to God, you will see how quickly they are answered. Once a trembling jailer ran into the presence of Paul and Silas and said,

"Men and brethren, what must I do to be saved?" It is the most important, the most infinitely important question in the universe,—and in the twinkling of an eye, St. Paul spoke out and said the biggest thing mortal man ever said,

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

You know when the scribes and cunning Pharisees and shrewd Sadducees used to approach Christ with the most knotty questions, He never said, “Wait till I come around again or consult an encyclopædia.”

Ah, no! we know that is not what the Son of Man said, but He always answered satisfactorily each question brought to Him. And now, while God answers immediately, I say to you that God propounds some questions to us that have been emblazoned upon the pages of that book for thousands of years, that we have never attempted to answer.

“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

There are two things involved in this discussion; one is the world, and the other is the soul. The world is a multitudinous affair. There isn't a want of my physical or temporal nature for which this world does not stand with outstretched, benevolent hands and say to me, “Here is what you want.” I have no patience with the idea that this is a hard world. I don't like to hear Christians going around singing, “This world is a howling wilderness.” The truth of the business is, when we turn into dogs, and go to howling, we can afford to sing on that line, but not until then. No howling wilderness for me, but a grand world. It is just such a world as the benevolent, gracious Father would give His children to live in for threescore and ten years. It is a glorious world, with all its health-giving and life-perpetuating properties. This earth, with all its bountiful stores of remedies and life-giving edibles and many multiplied blessings, is a grand old world. There may be larger and grander worlds than this, but at least, this is the only one you and I have to deal with. What is

it that you want to-day as a man that this world does not stand ready to supply? One reason why I know God has prepared an immortal home for me, is the fact that He has given me such a world to live in, for the few short days He leaves me here. If this is the tent, the tabernacle, what must the everlasting temple be?

I believe it was Talmage that used this illustration. He said, "If a man was going to invest in property, about the first thing he would do would be to look into the title, and after he had looked into the question of the title, the next question would be that of insurance, if the property is in town, or in buildings in the country. And then the last, and a very important question is, how have others been getting along who have owned this property? These are the three legitimate questions that always come up between man and man in the sale and purchase of property." Now, suppose I retire as a merchant. I have spent my days largely in merchandizing. I have accumulated a fortune, and now I want to retire to some beautiful country seat, where I may live at ease. I go out a few miles, and look over a magnificent farm, with its mansion, its outhouses, its running water, its meadows, its woodlands, and its farming lands. It suits me exactly. But as a successful business man, I am not going to pay down one dollar for it until I have gone to the courthouse, and examined the book of records and deeds and the book of liens and mortgages, and seen if I can get the proper title to this place, a title that will enable me to hold the property after I have paid for it.

When I look around this world, I see that it is just the world for me, and about the first thing I am going to look into is this—what kind of title can I get to it? Do you know, a man can give his soul for this

world, and yet in less than an hour after he has made the trade, Death may come along with writ of ejectment, and say, "Off these premises, get off forever." And the poor fellow will show his deed of absolute possession, but Death is blind, and cannot read it. Death is deaf, and cannot hear it read. How many men of my knowledge have built them beautiful new homes, and have prepared for comfort and ease, and yet in less than twelve months after they have moved into the new home, Death has come to the door, and, without knocking, has walked in and said, "Get out of this house and go with me to the city of the dead." And maybe the fellow had in his employ every doctor in town, and was begging the doctors to save him against the power of Death. But Death, in all of its awfulness, said to him, "You need not send for the doctors. You need not throw away your time. When I come for you, I mean to have you."

In my own home town, I can call to mind more than half a dozen different men who, in middle life, built and fixed up their homes elegantly, and in less than two years after they entered these homes, they were carried from them to the cemetery. Oh, the mansions that have had black crape tied on the door-knob! What does it mean? It means, every crape veil in this world and every emblem of mourning means, you cannot get any clear title to anything in this world. Oh, how true that is! And now I see a man, frugal, industrious, and economical, and all that sort of thing, and yet frugality and industry are not always at the bottom of our desire to get hold of this world; there is many a man who has accumulated and accumulated, and you walk up to him and ask him, "Are you a miser?" He says, "No, I am not a miser." "Well, what are you accumulating wealth

in this way for?" "Well, I'll tell you, I am laying up for Sallie and the children. I am determined that Sallie and the children shall never endure the hardships I have undergone. I am trying to leave something to take care of them with."

Poor old fellow, if he could see Sallie and the children twelve months after they take him to the graveyard, Sallie with her new teeth, and the children in their fine turnout, the old fellow would be astonished to see how Sallie and the children are getting on without him.

Lay up! An old miser! Laying up everything and laying up everywhere, and grasping in every direction all to lay up for Sallie and the children.

I love to see a man frugal and I love to see him accumulate, and I believe it is every man's duty, in an honest way, to put something aside for his wife, should he die and leave her. But when he passes the point where, really down in his heart, he is miserly and is not caring for wife and children, then after he is dead and gone, money will curse his children and perhaps curse his wife. I have seen that. I tell you the honest truth, if I had the opportunity in my life, and I don't know that I ever will, but if I had, I would lay by a competency to keep my wife from want, for she has given the best years of her life to me and my children; I would lay by enough to make my wife comfortable, in all her future days, but I would not lay by a dollar for one of my children. And do you know why? Because, if my children are of any account, they won't need it, and if they are of no account, every dollar I would give them would sink them lower. I wish men would learn that fact.

An old miser died in a Southern city, and after he died, the preacher told me he went there to spend the night. While there, he went up in the garret for

something, and saw the old man's picture hanging up there with its face towards the wall. They had sent it upstairs and turned its face to the wall. And yet that old man had spent all his life, saving up "for Sallie and the children." Look at one of our great financiers in New York State, who was besmirched all over after his death, and in a trial by his own legatees. Do you recollect it? If a true, good, noble man has laid up for his wife and children, in harmony with God, I say all right; but I say again, a miser's money will curse him, and after he is gone, will curse his family. But oh, the greed of gain that fills the hearts of so many thousands of men. Whenever a man shall ignore God and the rights of others, and accumulate money in every direction, that money will not only be a curse to him, but to his family after him.

I will tell you another thing. It isn't only the rich that run after this world. There's many a poor fellow that sells his soul for the things of this world, and yet never gets them. There's many a fellow on a farm, with nothing but forty acres of poor land, and an old stiff-eared mule, who stays right there, and goes to hell for the love of this world, and the love of money. He never had any, but he loves it.

I use this old world and what it has in it as I would use a walking-cane—to help me along to where I am going, and that's the only use I have for it. And anything that is in my power, that I can make help me upward, as a stepping-stone to a higher and better life, I want to use it.

Take A. T. Stewart, the richest merchant king in America. Just a week before his death it would have taken a hundred business men a hundred days to tell how much he was worth. But now that he is dead, a little fellow walks into his chamber and takes a

piece of tape out of his pocket and measures five feet ten inches one way and twenty inches the other, and goes out to the cemetery and puts that measure on the ground, and there's the sum total of all A. T. Stewart's wealth. Do you call that being rich? You take the moneyed princes of this world, that spend the greater part of their lives in gathering money, and ignoring God, and I declare to you, there are not enough millions in hell to-night, if the whole concern were to go into partnership, to buy a drop of water to cool their parched tongues. Do you call that being rich?

Oh, let me die like Lazarus at the rich man's gate, fed with the crumbs from his table. Let me die a pauper, and wake up in heaven, joint heir with Jesus Christ. Give me riches like that, infinite riches.

I reckon of all the insufferable conditions that pandemonium can offer to an immortal soul, as the poor fellow walks through the flames of damnation, the worst is the consciousness, "I am money-damned. I would have gone to heaven, but for my love of money. The devil tolled me into hell with dollars." Oh, what an awful state of affairs!

I have said frequently that if there is any sort of people I want to see get to heaven, more than another, it is the poor white folks and negroes. A poor fellow don't have anything in this world, and then to lay down and be damned forever, is too bad. These fellows riding around and having a big time, ignoring God and drinking champagne, playing cards, and going to the theatre, they can sort o' afford it, if such a thing be possible; but the poor man can't. For the man in hell, with the consciousness that he never had anything on earth, and then in hell forever, is a pretty bad thing for him, it seems to me. This old world, how deceptive it is. And then, when you have

given your soul for it and cannot get a shadow of a title for eternal possession, it seems too bad, and I believe no wise man will do that.

Then we come to the question of insurance. Take a piece of town property that an insurance agent will not write a policy on—how much could you get for it on the market? There is scarcely a sensible man who would buy it. Suppose you took an insurance agent to your home, and as you walked up to the front gate, the flames were bursting out of the cellar of your house. The insurance agent would say, “I cannot insure that property, it is already on fire in the basement; don’t you see the flames bursting out?” When you go to get insurance on this old world, the geologists tell us it is already on fire down in the basement, already burning down there, and some of the chimneys from the other world are Vesuvius and Etna. You see those burning volcanoes throwing out molten lava, year after year. I tell you geology tells us a great truth, when it tells us the world is on fire in the basement, and we have God Almighty’s word, which is absolute authority for it, that some day she will burn up.

Astronomers have pointed their telescopes here and there, and they tell us that within the last few years, thirteen worlds have disappeared. At first they looked like other worlds; after that they turned a deep red, showing that they were on fire, and then they put on an ashen colour, and have disappeared altogether, showing the very ashes were scattered abroad. I get a title to this world? Why, I can’t even get any insurance on it, and yet it is likely to be burned up any minute; and would I be willing to sell my soul for a thing that I could not even get a clear title to?

“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

Did you ever talk to a fellow after he had made a trade? In the city of Atlanta, Georgia, on Peach-tree Street, is one of the prettiest lots in the city. It has never been built on and you say to the real estate agent, "Why hasn't some one built on this beautiful lot?" And he says to you, "Every one who has had anything to do with this lot, has had trouble with it. They always buy a lawsuit when they buy it, and nobody wants it."

And yet, brother, I have watched this old world pretty closely, and every man who has had anything to do with it, has had trouble with it. Did you ever notice that the most miserable man in a community is the richest man? I asked a rich fellow once, if money made him happy. He said, "When I was a young man, I wanted ten thousand dollars. When I got ten thousand dollars, I wanted twenty thousand dollars, and then I wanted forty thousand dollars, twenty times as bad as I wanted twenty thousand, and, oh, there's no use in talking, it's just like drinking salt water—the more you drink of it, the more you want it, and the less room you have to hold it." And there's a good deal of truth in it.

Laying up! And that's the reason men say, "I can't be religious. I am busy looking after the world. I am busy taking care of life, and holding on to what I have got."

An old fellow once told me, "I've spent my life up to middle age making money, and I don't want to make another cent, but I'll tell you the honest truth, it is harder to keep it after you get it, than it is to make it, to start with."

It's a pity that those fellows who have got it piled up hold on to it, when everybody in the country wants some of it. Josh Billings says, "The old miser who has accumulated his millions, and sits down on them

afterwards, reminds me of a fly that has fallen into a barrel of molasses." There you have a picture just as complete as Josh Billings ever drew.

I saw in the paper not long ago that a man died in North Carolina and left Sam Jones a wonderful legacy. I was at my home in Cartersville, at that time. Several of my friends came up to see me and brought me the papers with this account in them. One said to me, "Sam, do you see this?" "Yes." "Well, what are you going to do about it?" "I'm not going to do anything." "Well, if I were you, I would write and tell them where I was." I said to them, "I am getting on all right without a legacy, and God knows what I would do with one if I had it." Don't you see what I mean? I want you all to have legacies and fine houses, and want to come around and see you and let you pay the taxes and the servants, and I will enjoy them. That's a good idea, isn't it?

"All things are yours." God said that. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.

"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours."

I believe in the doctrine, not of communism, but I believe in the doctrine of agrarianism. Everything is mine, thank God! I say, I have never had much money—and I reckon I never will—but I say this much, I have had money and I have seen folks who did have money, and I think some know what money will do, and I believe they will say with me, that a man is a fool, an immortal fool, who will sell his soul for money.

Right along here, at this point, I'll tell you an incident that occurred in a little town in Alabama where

I was born, before the war, in Oak Bowery, a little place just off the railroad. There were a great many wealthy planters who lived around this little town, and there were eight or ten stores and one saloon, and that was just about the time the lottery tickets came out and were popular. Several of the leading men of that place invested in lottery tickets, and this saloonkeeper also invested in one. The day after the drawing (there were no wires through the country at that time), they made up a plan and had everything arranged. One of the wealthy farmers drove up at a breakneck speed to the saloon, jumped out of his buggy, ran into the saloon, and said to the barkeeper, "I'll give you fifteen thousand dollars for your lottery ticket." The barkeeper said, "What did I draw?" "It makes no difference, I will give you fifteen thousand dollars for your ticket," said the man. The barkeeper said he would not take it unless he knew what he drew. Directly another man drove up and the man jumped out, and said to the saloonkeeper, "I'll give you twenty-five thousand dollars for your ticket in the lottery." The fellow said, "What did I draw?" The man replied, "I don't care what you drew, but I'll give you twenty-five thousand dollars for your ticket." But the barkeeper would not take the money. Directly another, and still another man drove up, and on and on, until they had offered him eighty-five thousand dollars for his ticket, and he would not take it. After they had all gone, the man locked up his saloon and went home and did not come back any more that day. The next morning he walked uptown to the postoffice, and the post that morning brought the news from the lottery, and when he saw that he had not drawn anything, he walked right back through that crowd of men, who had seen him the day before, and as he

passed through there was a suppressed titter of laughter.

He walked on a step or two and walked back and faced them. With a look of mingled resentment, sadness, disappointment, and joy in his face, he said, "Gentlemen, as an honest man, I am glad I did not draw one cent. I left my saloon yesterday at about one o'clock, just as certain that I had that capital prize, as if I had had it in my hand. I went home believing that I had it. I commenced talking with my wife, and we sat there all the balance of the day and all last night talking about what we would do with the money. And as God is my judge, I never spent a more miserable time in my life, and I am glad I didn't get that money. I was rich yesterday and last night; just as rich as if I had had the money in my hands. Now I had rather be poor a thousand times, than to be rich once!" Do you get the idea? That fellow tried it once, and knew what he was talking about.

What is this world? A man will die and leave his daughters a hundred thousand dollars apiece, and another man will die next door and not leave his daughters a cent. The poor girls go to work, the rich girls go to keeping up with the fashions. Now watch them, three years from that time. The fashionable girls look sallow, pale, and bloodless and almost dead on their feet. The girls who are making an honest, upright living do not have to follow the tyranny of fashions, are vigorous, healthy, rosy girls. Having to keep up the fashions will kill a girl quicker than it will if she sews all day for her living. What do you want with money? How many in this world are making a fatal mistake right at this point. What do you want with it, to curse you and curse your family?

In the country in which I live, I go up the banks of the beautiful Etowah River, to what is known as Horseshoe Bend, where there are the finest plantations in my state, and I take those plantations one after another—the old owners died during the war—and I tell you the truth when I say, that nine out of ten of their boys have already filled drunkards' graves and drunkards' hells. Twenty thousand dollars! A hundred thousand dollars will buy nine boys out of ten a through ticket to hell, and they will invest in it the first thing they do, and check their baggage right through, and heaven and earth cannot stop them. Now, don't you know this is true?

If my father, instead of turning to me in his dying hour to bid me meet him in heaven, had spent his life in accumulating money, and had turned over to me twenty thousand dollars at his death, I would likely have been in hell this minute. God bless you, brother, and show your children there is something better than money, better than this world, better than all the surroundings, and show them that there is a God and an eternity, and that a good character is worth far more than goods and chattels.

“For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

You ask, “Who ever got the whole world? Who ever got one-millionth part of the world?” Some of you think you are rich if you have a hundred thousand dollars. What is a hundred thousand dollars, compared with the Vanderbilt fortune? Or, if you had the Vanderbilt fortune, what is that compared with the city of New York? And the city of New York, if you owned it all, what is it compared to America? And if you owned all America, what is it compared with the balance of the world? I suspect you could put two such worlds as this in your pocket,

and go up to the dog star and stay all night, and you wouldn't have enough to pay your hotel bill in the morning.

After all, what is there in this world that takes up so much of our time, so much of our talent, so much of our energy, and yet profiteth us so little?

A father said to me, "I have two boys who are dissipated and my money is ruining my boys, and I know it." I said to him, "You say you have got money enough to ruin both of your boys, and I'll tell you how to dodge that thing." He said, "How?" I said, "Give me twenty thousand dollars of each of your boys' money for our Orphans' Home, and you go home to-night and says, 'Boys, I have given Sam Jones forty thousand dollars, and the next time either of you get drunk, I am going to give him forty thousand more, and the third time you get drunk, I am going to leave him every dollar of property I have saved for you boys, when I die,' and if that don't straighten your boys out, every dollar you leave them will sink them deeper into hell. For before my money should damn my children, I would give it all to the Orphans' Homes in this country." But strange to say, he never gave me a cent, and the trouble is, I suspect that he is headed the same way the boys are.

I heard a man say the other day that he knew a man who died and who willed every cent he had to the saloonkeepers. "Well, well!" I said. "How peculiar. I never heard of such a thing before." The man said, "He didn't will it directly to them; he willed it indirectly to them. He gave it to his boys, and everybody knows the saloonkeepers will get it all."

This world, with all that it has, can be nothing to me but a stepping-stone down to hell, or a stepping-stone to a higher, better life. You can go down among the rich bottom lands of the Mississippi and

Missouri rivers, and there you find the most impure waters and the most malarious atmosphere. You can go up among the old red hills of Georgia, and the clearest, most sparkling waters you ever saw gurgle up through the rocks at the side of her mountains, and the sweetest atmosphere blows over those old red hills. Among the rich of the earth is the most corruption, the most wickedness and the most guilt. And ever and anon, among the poor of the earth, you will find the sweetest virtues and the noblest characters. Oh, for a pure atmosphere, a pure life, a true life, that lives above the gain and greed of this world.

When a man gets drunk on money, he is gone, and I am afraid we preachers are not candid with him. We do not tackle him as we should. When an old fellow gets drunk with whiskey, his friends go to him and say, "Look here, old fellow, you are going to the devil. I wish you would quit it and live straight." His wife pleads with him, his minister pleads with him, and all his friends plead with him; but when a fellow gets drunk with money, his wife doesn't say anything to him about it. She does not say, "Husband, you are going to hell." The preacher does not tackle him; he's afraid to. There's many a man drunk with money, and have we been to him and told him so? Have we said to him, "You are drunk with money and with avarice, and the devil is going to get you"? We want the favour of these rich old fellows, because we know if we bother them they will neutralize our power, and then we cannot do anything. And so we think the best thing to do is to let the old fellow alone, and, oh, when a fellow gets drunk on money, no one bothers him.

Sometimes I think we preachers do not tell the truth as we should, to these men who are giving their souls

in exchange for the world. I will say to you, I don't know what is keeping you from being a Christian. I cannot tell you what it is that keeps you out of the church and away from God, but I will say, that whatever it is, whether it is the dance, or whiskey, or licentiousness, I care not what it is that is keeping you from Christ and out of the church, you can put all these things together in one common pile, and point to it and say, "That is the price I put on my immortality. That is the price for which I have sold my soul."

This young man will say, "I would join the church, but I love to dance." A young lady will say, "I would join the church, but I love to dance." Suppose you go to about two hundred balls (and that is a big allowance, is it not?) and that you dance hundreds of sets. By and by you die without God and without hope. And down in the lurid flames of damnation you go forever, and as you walk the streets of despair, you can tell its inmates, "I am in hell forever, it is true, but I danced four hundred sets."

Daniel Webster was once asked, "Won't you dance with us?" Mr. Webster said, "No." "Well, why?" he was asked. He said, "I don't know how to dance, I haven't sense enough." See the point? He had just enough sense to be a man.

There is a young man who says, "I would join the church, but I drink, and I don't see any harm in a dram." Now, young man, go and buy forty barrels of fine cognac brandy, and roll it into your cellar and live long enough to drink every drop of it, and then sink down to hell forever, and tell the lost ones there, "I am lost forever, but I drank forty barrels of the finest brandy that ever was, before I got here."

Oh, who will risk it? At a revival service, a young lady sitting in the back of the church, when the

preacher plead with the congregation to give their hearts to God, said to the young man who was with her, "I would go, but I have promised to go to a ball three weeks from to-night, and I can't miss it." When the preacher kept pleading, "Oh, who will risk it? Who will risk it?" this young lady opened a hymnbook and wrote on the flyleaf, "I will risk it," and signed her name. Two weeks after that time, when she lay on her dying bed, the preacher came to see her and asked her about her soul. She turned to him, with a look of despair and said, "Oh, there's no chance for my salvation. I am damned, eternally damned." When the preacher asked her what she meant, she said, "Go to the church and look on the flyleaf of one of the hymnbooks, and see where I have written, 'I will risk it,' and signed my name, and, oh, I have given my soul's salvation for something I never had the opportunity to enjoy."

Oh, who will risk it! Who will risk it! What do you want to dance for, young lady? What use is it to you? If I had to marry a dozen times—and I am like the Irishman who said, he hoped he would not live long enough to see his wife married again—I would never go to the ballroom to get my wife. Do you hear that? I used to dance with girls, but when I wanted to get married I didn't go to the ballroom to get a wife. I wanted one of the prayer-meeting kind. Many a fellow got a good wife out of the ballroom, but many a fellow didn't. What good does it do you to be able to dance? Take the best girl in our town, and after her family is reduced in a crisis in her father's business, she is poor and must earn her living for herself. I will introduce her to a dozen of the leading men of the town and give her a worthy recommendation in every respect. She is thoroughly competent as a music-teacher, as a sales-

lady, or in any other capacity. But I would add as a postscript to this recommendation—she is a first-class dancer. And that will knock her out of every place. She can't even get a place to teach dancing, only the hook-nosed Frenchman need apply for that job.

The thing that keeps us away from God and out of the church, is the price we put on our souls. I never think of this, that I don't think of an incident in which a husband sat by his wife at a revival meeting. When penitents were asked to come to the altar, the wife, seeing that her husband had been affected by the sermon, urged him to go forward. He shook his head and would not go. After they returned home, she said to him, "Oh, how I wish you had gone forward to-night and given your heart to God." He said, "Wife, I cannot be a Christian and stay in the business I am in." She said, "Husband, I know that, but I want you to give up your business, and give your heart to God." He said, "I cannot afford it"—he was a saloonkeeper. "Well," she said, "how much do you clear each year in your saloon?" "My net profits are about two thousand dollars a year." "Well, how long do you think you will live to continue your business?" "Twenty years is the natural order of things," he said. "Well, how much is twenty times two thousand?" she said. "Forty thousand dollars," he replied. "Forty thousand dollars, and now, husband, if you could get forty thousand dollars in a lump, would you sell your soul to hell for that sum?" He said, "No, wife, no! I'll close out my business in the morning and give my heart to God. I would not sell my soul for four hundred million dollars."

O that we all could see that what keeps us out of the church and away from God, is the price we pay for our immortal soul.

Price! Soul! Those are the words with which we deal in this text. Here is the world, and here is the soul. My soul, with its immortal interests, my soul that shall live forever, my soul that will shake off this body by and by and lay it aside as a child does its toy after it is done playing with it, my soul, that shall throw this body down and fly away from it, shall I give my immortal soul for this world? No, a thousand times no!

What then? I will give my soul to Christ. He alone is worthy of it. He died to save it.

Yonder is a parliament. Adam has just fallen, and subjected the whole race to death, and now the reverberating thunders of God's wrath are heard athwart the whole moral universe, and the announcement is made in that parliament, "Adam, a man made in the image of God, has fallen." The great federal head of the race has sinned and fallen. A voice from the great "I Am" spoke out, "Who will take man's redemption upon his shoulders and bring him back to life?" I imagine the archangel stands up in that Presence and shakes his snowy wings and says, "The task is too great for me." I imagine Gabriel stands up and says, "I shall blow the trumpet which will wake the dead, but this task is too great for me." But all at once, there is one who stands up in that Presence and says, "I will take man's redemption on my shoulders." And the angels begin to wonder, and it has been the cause of increasing wonder, ever since, that He should come, that He should become the Redeemer, that He should become man, that He might redeem the race and be the Saviour of men.

You saw, some years ago, that a ship in the Atlantic Ocean had sprung a leak way down in the bottom of her hull. As soon as the leak was discovered, the announcement was made by the captain of the vessel,

and the pumps were put to work, but they could not expel the water as fast as it entered through the leak. The only hope for the safety of the vessel was that some one would risk his life, in order to stop the leak. Volunteers were asked for, and one man spoke up and said, "I will go down, I will risk my life that the others may live." He went down through the upper, then the lower, then the third deck, and he reached down into the hull of the ship, and worked there until perfectly exhausted. The pumps began to work, and the old ship grew lighter. And by and by, the captain said, "The leak is stopped; let us go down and see about our friend." They went down to the third deck, and there saw his body floating on the water. They brought him up, embalmed his body, and when land was reached, they carried it ashore and buried it. And the spot was marked with a stone, upon which was the epitaph,

"This friend gave his life that we might live," and all the names of those he saved were engraved below.

Yonder is the old ship Humanity. And now the waves of God's judgment begin to pitch and toss and drive her on the rocks, and she is about to go down forever, when the Son of God sees her. Then we see Him come from the shining shores of heaven, as swift as the morning light, and He throws His arms around the old sinking ship. She carried Him under, three days and nights, but thank God, He brings her to the surface on the third morning, and God grasps the stylus and signs the Magna Charta of man's salvation, and then at that blessed moment is written,

"Whosoever believeth in the Son of God, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." And, oh, can't we say, "I will give my life to Him who has given His life for me"?

Down South, before the War, slaves were put on

the block and sold to the highest bidder. Sometimes the slave would run away and the owner could not get him back, and he would sell him on the run. "How much for him running?" the auctioneer would say.

When God Almighty turned the world over to Jesus Christ, He turned it over running—running away from God, running away to hell and death—and the Lord Jesus Christ came, and purchased poor, fallen humanity in its wayward flight with His precious blood, and said, "Come back to God. I died that you might live." And, oh, will you go with Christ, your elder brother, and find salvation there at the cross, and heaven in the end? Say with me, "I will turn my attention to heaven, and to eternal life. I will give up this world, and all there is in it, for,

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

V

THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN

"As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death."—PROVERBS xi: 19.

WHEN a good man dies, he not only goes to heaven, drawn thither by the natural force of spiritual gravity, and by the approval of God and angels, but when a good man dies he goes to heaven by the common consent of all intelligent beings in all the world.

When a bad man dies, he not only goes to hell, drawn thither by the natural force of spiritual gravity, by the approval of God and angels, but when a bad man dies he goes to hell by the common consent of every other man in the universe.

Did you ever attend the funeral of a good man, one who was known and read of all men? And haven't you sat in the church as the preacher said, "Here lies the body of our brother, and his spirit has gone home to God, to live forever with the angels"? Have you not gone out of the church and heard both saint and sinner say, "That's the truth. That man has gone home to heaven; the preacher told the truth when he said he had gone home to God"?

Did you ever attend the funeral of a wicked man—perhaps a member of the church, but a man who did not live up to his vows to God and to the church? And haven't you heard the minister say, "Here lies our brother's body, but his spirit has gone home to

heaven"? Have you not seen the look of disapproval among those who knew him in the congregation, and when you walked out on the street later, have you not heard both saint and sinner say, "That preacher outraged every principle of truth, and I will never hear him again. He knows that man hasn't gone home to heaven, and we know it and everybody else knows it, and my confidence is gone in him forever"?

O my brother! This old world won't let a preacher preach a man into heaven when he is bad. Neither will it let a man preach a man into hell when he is good. The preacher's words cannot take us to heaven any more than they can take us to hell. If a man is in heaven at all, he is there long before the preacher takes his text, and if he is in hell, he is there as soon as his spirit leaves his body, and a great deal of harm can be done by a preacher who takes a false position at this point. Telling the truth or telling an untruth cannot harm the dead, but it may do a great deal of harm to the living.

"As righteousness tendeth to life." The common convictions of humanity are in perfect accord with my text. Heaven is the centre of gravity to a good man, and hell is the centre of gravity to a bad man. This is emphasized in almost every page in the Scripture. Right elevates, sin pulls down. He who goes upward reaches the home of the blessed, he who goes downward sinks to final destruction. "The path of the just is as a shining light, shining more and more, unto the perfect day." A good man's tendencies are upward and onward, higher and higher. The good man has the promise of the life that now is, and everlasting life in the world to come. And just as sure as goodness and righteousness tend to life hereafter, just so "the bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days." So "the way of the trans-

gressor is hard," so "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

No physical disease, as cholera, yellow fever, bubonic plague, or leprosy, is more deadly to the body than sin is to the soul and character.

Sin is not only an act that is wrong, but sin is a disease. I once heard Robert McIntyre lecture on, "From Jerusalem to Jericho." He told how he and his guide had ridden on the outskirts of Jerusalem, out near the lepers' colony, and how he had seen the fearful ravages caused by that most loathsome disease, leprosy. He told of the men and women whose feet and hands had been eaten off, whose noses had been eaten out, and whose ears had sloughed from their faces, and whose teeth had rotted out, and of the horrible advanced stages of this dread disease. He said while riding up one of the streets he met a fearful-looking woman, crawling along, marred in face and feature in a most horrible way. In her arms was a beautiful little baby. He inquired of the guide whose baby the woman held, and was told it was her own—for lepers are married and given in marriage. The guide said, "This baby has the virus of this disease in its nature, and when it is eight or ten years old its nails will begin to slough off, its fingers and toes will rot off, and its teeth will come out. When it reaches the age of maturity, it will be a horrible, deformed creature like its mother." Oh, the fearful, fearful thought! What a picture of sin!

I have seen an innocent little fellow with a drunken man, and when I learned that the child was the drunkard's boy, and that he was even then eating the sugar out of the glass where his father had sweetened his whiskey, I exclaimed, "Oh, horrible disease of sin that wrecks father, then son." I have seen a sweet little girl led by a ruined woman, her mother.

I have asked if the child would become debauched and ruined like the mother, and have been told, "Yes." Oh, the transmitted sin of disease and appetite! What a thought! When a drunkard's child is born, it is already half drunkard, and if both parents drink, it will take the combined powers of heaven and earth to save that child from a drunkard's grave. The sins of the father are visited on the children "to the third and fourth generation."

There was once a very fine colt in New York, foaled on a stock farm outside of the city. The colour of the colt was a source of amazement to his owner. He was a dark sorrel with a cream mane and tail. The owner could not think where the unusual marking of the colt came from,—the combination of the deep sorrel and cream. He began to trace back the lineage of the colt and found that nineteen generations back the sire of the colt was a deep sorrel colour, with a cream mane and tail. Oh, the thought that disease not only kills, but is transmitted to the little helpless ones of our homes, causing them misery, degradation, and death.

"He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death." I don't need any Bible to teach me that sin will kill, that sin will doom, and that sin will destroy. I don't need any Bible on that point. I never see a poor, staggering drunkard, that I don't look into his face and say, "O Lord God, sin is ruining that man, sin is killing that man, and sin will finally damn that man." I never see a poor, pale, halting, ruined woman on the streets of the city, that I don't look at her tottering form and say, "Sin has ruined that woman, sin has doomed that woman, and sin will finally damn that woman." I don't need any Bible to teach me that sin is death to the body and death to the soul, and, oh, sin does its work gradually, and

the victim is almost gone before he realizes his condition.

Sin is likened to the bite of a deadly serpent in the far East. One of our missionaries saw a native who had been bitten by one of these reptiles. In a few moments the man said, looking at the foot that was bitten, "My foot is dead to my ankle," and in a few moments he said, "This leg is dead to my knee." Finally he said, "My whole right side is dead to my waist," and in a few hours the poison had grappled with the auricles and ventricles of that man's heart and he was dead. Oh, sin, how it does its work gradually on its victim until he dies, almost before he realizes his condition.

"He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death."

The idea fully expressed here, is this: The natural tendencies of men are evil, and all a man needs to be doomed here and damned hereafter, is just to follow the bent and inclination of his own heart. Sin is likened unto a cancer on the soul. I took up a newspaper some months ago, and read that Senator Ben. H. Hill, our brilliant, brainy statesman of Georgia, had a little trouble on the tongue. They made light of it and said it was caused by a fractured tooth. A few days after that, in reading a daily paper, I saw that Senator Hill had been under the surgeon's knife, and they had removed one-third of his tongue and the doctors had said to him, "This wound will heal and you will be all right in a few days." In a few weeks I saw again that Senator Hill was back under the surgeon's knife in Philadelphia, and the doctors had cut out the glands from his face and neck. The paper told how young Ben. Hill had turned to the doctors and said, "Will my father get well?" The surgeons replied guardedly, "If we have extracted the

last particle of virus of this cancer from his system, he will certainly get well. But if there is the least particle of cancer germ left in his system it will appear in some other gland and this trouble will be renewed." The next I heard of Senator Hill was, that he was at some famous springs in the West. Some weeks afterwards, I walked down to the depot in my home town, and when the passenger train rolled into the city, trembling under her air brakes, and stopped, I looked toward the window in the sleeping-car, and thought I saw the outlines of Senator Hill's face. I walked down to the car, and he pushed his bony hand out of the window and took mine, and I looked into his face, and said to myself, "O my Lord! Is this all that is left of Senator Ben. H. Hill, one of the grandest men Georgia has ever produced?"

A few days afterward I read in the *Atlanta Constitution*, "The grandest procession that ever marched out of Atlanta marched out yesterday, and buried Senator Benjamin H. Hill out of the sight of men forever."

I want to tell you, just as certain as the virus of cancer killed Senator Hill's body, just so certain does the virus of sin kill your soul at last. It isn't a question of how you have been baptized. It isn't a question of what church you belong to. The only question for time and eternity with every mortal man, is this, "Has this virus of sin been extracted from my soul?"

Oh, thank God that eighteen hundred years before I was born, the old world began to sing,

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day ;

And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away."

Blessed be God for this fountain, opened in the House of David for uncleanness! The world has been washing away its guilt for hundreds of years, and here to-day, we bid you who are wretched, hungry, starving, debauched, degraded, and unclean, we bid you come to the living fountain and drink, and never be thirsty again.

"He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to the death" of his own conscience. The poet was nearly right when he said,

"What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns us not to do,
This teach me more than hell to shun,
And more than heaven pursue."

Every sin of a man's life is a direct stab at his conscience. When men start a life of sin, and sin on and on, there comes a time, by and by, when their conscience is honeycombed with the stabs of sin, and it expires and breathes its last, and the man walks through life without a conscience.

O conscience! that reigning principle in my bosom, that speaks out when wrong presents itself, and thunders out against the wrong! That something in me that approves the right, and disapproves the wrong! Every sin of my life is a stab at this conscience, and by and by I make the fatal stab, and conscience is dead forever.

Will you let me say to you that the great trouble with this country is that conscience is stabbed to death. Would our government, our states, our cities, be run as they are, if conscience was alive? No, a thousand times I say, No! National conscience is

dead, and if a man goes into a great *crédit-mobilier*, or any other job in the country, and filches from the government thousands or millions of dollars, he is dubbed "colonel" and sent to the United States Senate, and is considered one of the leading citizens of America. But if a poor negro steals a dollar to buy bread, he spends his lonely, weary time in jail and in the chain-gang! Oh, the conscienceless officials, who have charge of affairs of state and nation! What is the matter? Conscience is dead!

The great trouble with America is that the national conscience is dead. We are in copartnership with every brewery and distillery, and every drop of liquor dished out over the counters of the saloons in this country. Seven hundred thousand mothers and wives and daughters can petition that body for relief from the accursed liquor traffic, but no relief comes to them from that direction. Greed and the desire for office has killed the conscience of our officials. "Office, at any cost to me or to my constituents."

Not only is the national conscience dead, but the state conscience is dead. The statesmen, so-called, elected by our sovereign states, as members of a constitutional convention, meet and spend three months each year, vaporizing and hurrahing, and yet it seems they can't pass anything, not even a saloon. I say to you, if the legislative bodies of our different states had a conscience void of offence toward God and man, they would give us a law on our statute books forever abolishing the infamous saloon, and driving from our midst the curse and misery that blights our fair land to-day.

Whenever conscience shall live in the bosoms of politicians and statesmen, they will take our states out of copartnership with the breweries and distilleries, and listen to the pleas of the brokenhearted

mothers and wives and little children of this country.

Not only is our state conscience dead, but our municipal conscience is dead. If the devil should come in bodily shape, and take charge of our cities, would he change the officials of our towns and cities? Would gambling hells have any less fear of running than they have now? Would there be fewer men convicted of selling liquor, less Sunday desecration, less whiskey sold to minors, or fewer rascals sent to the penitentiary for their devilment?

Don't you know that whenever the cities and towns say, "You sha'n't sell whiskey in this place," don't you know it's got to get out? And I'll tell you another thing, the barkeepers and the saloonkeepers are gentlemen by the side of the cities that license them to dish out damnation to the fathers, the husbands, the sons of this country. It seems a hard thing to say, and yet the barkeeper is selling this accursed stuff to get a little money to feed his wife and children, and the cities are letting him sell it, if he will give them part of the money—the money that debauches the pride of our homes—the money that makes orphans of our helpless children, the money that causes more sorrow than any other money spent in the whole world—to fix up their streets, to keep up their public schools, and to make other improvements in their cities that they deem so necessary.

One city in Alabama said if the saloons should close up, they would be compelled to close every public school in the city, and that it would turn many poor helpless women out on the streets without a job. God help such a city! And this is just the way it is in this country. I tell you if the Lord Almighty would come down and rake up and dig the dirt off our consciences, where they lie dead and

buried, and if He were to burst the tombstones from off the graves, and tear the grave-clothes from off of them, and let them walk the streets of our cities for one day, oh, how we would revolutionize this country!

Money to run our public schools! O my brother, I would rather every child I have would grow up ignorant of every branch of learning, than be educated on the blood-money wrung from the hearts and lives of our brokenhearted women and helpless children. "The cry for money to run public schools," simply means this to a sensible man, "We will debauch every daddy in town, and when they are debauched, we will take a part of the money they pay over to the saloon, and give it to the schools in town. Debauch the daddy and educate the kid," and when a fellow staggers home drunk and the wife looks at him and says, "O husband, you are drinking again," he replies, "Yes, Sallie, you know the educational fund comes from the saloons, and how can the saloons pay the school funds, if we poor fellows do not patronize them?"

O my God! It is better, far better, that your children grow up in ignorance, than that they should pay this price for their education!

I am down on any crowd that is so greedy that they are not willing to pour damnation down a fellow's throat six days in the week and quit at that. I am! They are the greediest men I ever saw, and they are not willing to compromise on six days' work for hell and damnation in a week, and, oh, that our officials' consciences were alive, so that they would demand that the right be enforced and that the wrong be punished.

The church conscience is dead! I want to tell you right now, a Christian man cannot patronize the places of sin that many of our church members are found

in. The day that a Christian man consecrates his all to God, he no longer patronizes institutions of this sort. In many of the large cities, the theatres are opened on God's holy day as well as on the other six days in the week. And if I had nothing in God Almighty's world against the theatre, I would be down on any crowd that could not make a living in six days, and who had to rush over on God's Sabbath, and desecrate His holy day that they might make a living for themselves. I am down on that sort of thing, world without end.

You say that I am down on the theatres, but if you will bring the theatres up to the standard of the church, make them as good as the church—and that would not be hard to do in many instances—I pledge you my word, I will support them. If they will agree, one and all, to keep the commandments, I will stand up and advocate them. But I am down on them as long as they are down on the Ten Commandments. And I will tell you another thing. We members of the church stand around and curse barkeepers—in a pious way I mean—and abuse barkeepers and abuse saloons; but let me tell you this: Every citizen in every town that licenses a saloon walks up to the barkeeper and says, "We will license you if you will divide up." Now isn't that saying, "If you will pay us taxes for selling it, so that we may have money to fix up our streets and keep our town growing, we will pat you on the back, and protect you. If you will slip two hundred dollars a year into the city's pocket, to fix the street leading up to the church, we will not allow our preachers to say anything against you, and we will treat you like a brother." I don't know whether they ever told the preachers to shut their mouths or not. Maybe the majority have done so voluntarily. Maybe they didn't have to make them, and, oh, the sad fact,

that in many cases the church has ceased to cry out against the evils that blight her.

The family conscience is dead! There are hundreds of parents who sit down to their table and eat with less gratitude to God for the bountiful meal before them, than the hogs in the pen in the lot. For the hog will grunt an expression of gratitude, but not a word of gratitude is heard from many fathers for God's mercy to them.

The family prayer, with its incense burning, shedding blessing on the lives of each member of the home, goes up from but a few Christian homes at this time. O how awful the charge of the boy who said to his father, "I am dying, and I am dying unsaved. When I am dead, bury me on the pathway to the horse-lot, and three times each day, when you go to the lot to feed the horse, look at my grave and say, 'There lies my poor boy, dead and damned, and he never heard his father pray.'" How many poor boys in our land can say to-day, "I never heard my father pray"—and yet that father may be an official in the Church of God.

You don't pray with your family, you don't attend prayer-meeting, you scarcely do anything that a father, rearing a family of immortal souls, should do.

Not only is the family conscience dead, but the individual conscience is dead.

I ask you how you feel spiritually, and you say "All right." Poor fool! You don't know the difference between feeling all right and feeling not at all. That's what's hurting you. I tell you it takes a philosopher to tell the difference right in there. A dead man feels as good as anybody, but he does not feel at all. As soon as we get the consciences of our individuals aroused, we will put whiskey out of this country, and they may find a hundred bills of injunc-

tion, but mark what I tell you, whiskey will have to go. When the majority of men in a town say a thing, "can't be did, it ain't going to be did, that's all."

The majority in this country always did, and always will rule. And when a fellow don't like to live in a country where the majority rules, then he can emigrate. And yet, if you will look at our ports and see how they are coming, millions strong, to this "land of the free and home of the brave," you will see that this kind of thing suits, at least, the majority of us.

Talk about sumptuary laws! I tell you this: I was born a democrat, raised a democrat, and never voted anything but a democratic ticket until I gave my heart to God, and promised Him I would never vote with any party who advocated whiskey. But if you try to run sumptuary laws down my throat, in the shape of a barrel and a demijohn, then you make me sorry that I ever was a democrat. When you look and see the democratic party coming down the road, you can clear the way for them. You will see a governor astride a whiskey barrel (most generally speaking), and all the other little democratic politicians riding demijohns down the road—that's the way they've got the thing in this country.

But the republicans needn't laugh, they are little better and have the negro question added. Thank God I never was a republican! Bring the two parties together now, the republican party running on the negro and the democratic party running on whiskey—that's about the way it stands—and when I say, "Tell me your platforms," the democrat says to me, "Now, if you are a good democrat, just swallow this candidate and this barrel and this demijohn, and if you don't, you are not a good democrat." And the republican says, "You have got to swallow this can-

didate and this negro, and if you don't, you are not a good republican,"—and *you* men think you are obliged to swallow one or the other. Well, it looks this way to me: There's the democrat and his whiskey, and here's the republican and his negro; you tell me I've got to swallow one or the other; and as my mind reverts back to my past life and I think of the great sorrow that came into my home, on account of whiskey, I say to myself, "One bottle of whiskey has done me a thousand times more harm than all the negroes of all the Southern States," and I say to you, "Just pin that fellow's ears back, and grease him good, and down he goes."

That's just my honest sentiment about it. I despise this miserable loyalty to party, that makes me bare my back to a party lash and whips me into voting for any man, no matter how corrupt are his principles.

O God Almighty! Raise the conscience of America from the dead and let our men no longer ask, "Is he a democrat, or is he a republican?" but let the question be, "Is he a pure, good man, and will he do right if he is elected to office?" I will never vote for a drunkard or a gambler or a debauched man, I don't care who nominates him. I thank God I have too much conscience for that.

We have sinned and sinned until conscience is stabbed to death, and we are a good deal like the fellow who said that when he joined the church any little thing he did that was not right, almost killed him, but now he had gotten to the place where he could steal a horse, and it did not bother him. This seems amusing when you think of it, and yet how many of us, when we first went into the church and took the vows of God's church upon us, felt that we could never go into a life of sin and neglect of God's laws again.

And yet how far so many of us have wandered away! So many men's consciences are stabbed to death; so many cannot see any harm in this and that. God Almighty, arouse our conscience, and bring it to life once more! We have forgotten that we are "soldiers of the cross, and followers of the Lamb." Instead of drawing our swords and battling for the right, and daring to do the right at all costs, we are wincing and whining around and saying, "I don't see any harm in this, I don't see any harm in that."

Conscience! Conscience! Conscience! I know many people say I am fanatical. Do you know the difference between a fanatic and one of your sort? One's conscience is alive, and the other's is dead and buried. It doesn't take a live conscience long to make a fanatic out of a fellow. I have found that out.

"He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to the death" of his sensibilities. Sensibility is the mother of sentiment, and sin destroys the last sentiment in the human bosom, and sentiment is the divinest element in man, for it is sentiment that lends beauty to the sunset, glory to a landscape, fragrance to a rose. He who has the most of sentiment, is closest akin to his mother, and he who is closest akin to his mother, is closest akin to God. The natural tendency of sin is to dry up the fountain of man's sensibilities. There are men who could not shed a tear if they could get a kingdom for a single tear. All the sensibilities of their nature are dried up, and you might just as well preach to a dead man as to them. What do they care for the pleadings of the drunkards' wives and the heart-broken mothers? I can take a dozen men in any city to one desolated home, and get the sweet little woman of that home to tell us how her husband, in a drunken midnight debauch, committed a crime, for which he is

now paying the penalty. We will get her to tell us of her better days and happier hours, and how the black-beaked buzzards of despair feed upon her, and we will watch the little unkempt, ragged children, as they crouch in the corner of the room. And then look at your saloons in their work of debauchery, and tell me they are right? O man! you have sinned until you have stabbed your sensibilities to death, and everything that makes you akin to God, is dead. The sweetest and purest sentiment of life, is that something that makes me honour my mother, shield my wife, protect my daughter, and nerves me to do no less for every other man's loved ones. But what do you care if you drag every woman down to misery and death? O my God! pity a poor man who has sinned on and on until he has stabbed his sensibilities to death, and has no feeling about his immortal interests or about the interests of his loved ones.

"He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to the death" of his powers of resistance. You see that throttle, with that engineer's hand on it? You see that engine rolling at the rate of fifty miles an hour, with an impulse almost omnipotent? The greatest power of the nineteenth century is the throttle valve of an engine, the power to go ahead. The next greatest power, in the nineteenth century, is the lever of those air brakes, the power to stop. First is the "go ahead" power, and the next is the stopping power.

I was sitting on an engine some months ago, with a friend who was an engineer, and glancing up, I said to him, "Look at those cattle on the track." We were rolling forty miles an hour toward our destination. He took hold of the lever of the air brakes, and turned it around, and slapped on every brake on every wheel, and blew the whistle and gave the cattle time to clear the track; but for the brake power of that

engine the cattle might have ditched the train and killed half the people on it.

The power to stop! the power to stop! I believe it was on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, some time ago, that a passenger engineer pulled his long train of thirteen cars, heavily loaded, up a steep grade, until he reached the tunnel. When he ran out of the tunnel he pulled out his watch and saw that he was an hour behind time. He had seventeen miles down-grade to the river. He shoved his lever forward and pulled the throttle open, and that engine commenced to roll and thunder down that grade until it reached the speed of sixty miles an hour. Down the grade and on and on she rolled, with every pound of steam against her piston-head, until she rolled within a few miles of the bridge that crossed the river. When she reached that point, the engineer shut off the steam, turned the lever of the air brakes, and, horror of horrors! not a brake on that train would work. He instantly awoke to the peril and said, "I am within a mile or two of the river, with a speed of sixty miles an hour, and my air brakes will not work." He reached up and caught the whistle lever, and blew a fearful blast, that called for "down brakes." The brakeman ran to the car-door and stood there. The car was jumping and jerking and tossing, and the brakeman said to himself, "It is certain death for me to walk on the platform to the brakes." The engineer, feeling that no brakes had been applied, and with his train rolling on with an increased momentum, reached out again and caught hold of the whistle lever, and again with a fearful blast called for brakes. The conductor ran to the rear of the car where the brakeman stood, and said, "Go out, and put on the brakes. Don't you see we are nearing the bridge? The engineer has called twice for brakes." The brakeman said, "We cannot

go out there on the platform; it is certain death to go out there, and yet it is almost certain death to stay in here."

The train soon rolled on to the bridge, the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh cars rolled across the bridge in safety, but the first sleeper swung too far to the left, struck the bridge, and six sleepers were buried in the river below with their freighted tons of humanity. What was the matter? The brakes would not work. I tell you there are thousands of men who have pulled on top of the grade and have started down, with an increased momentum, and on and on they roll, and yet not a brake on their nature will work.

Poor Bob Herrick! A good-natured, kind-hearted man he was, who lived in Rome, Georgia. Against the pleadings of his wife, and the physicians, he drank on and on, until he came to his dying bed, where he was surrounded by his friends, who could do nothing for him. It took four men to hold him on the bed, and when the last lucid moments came to him, he said, "Doctor, is there any chance for my life?" The doctor replied, "No, Bob. If you drink, you'll die, and if you don't drink you'll die." Two hours afterward poor Bob Herrick foundered on the rocks of damnation, with his wife and children clinging around his neck. Gone! Gone! Gone forever!

The old stagecoach driver in the Rocky Mountains had driven up and down the mountains for ten, twenty, thirty years. He always drove his team, two, four, six horses, two abreast, in perfect safety, to and from his destination. When he came to die some friends, coming in, noticed he kept slipping his foot outside of the bed, and muttering something to himself. Finally some one asked him what was wrong. The old man looked up and said, "I am go-

ing down the steepest grade I ever saw, and my foot won't reach the brake."

There is a perpendicular hill, just ahead of you, my friend, and O my God! will your foot reach the brake?

There are men, perhaps, who are listening to me who will never stop cursing; you will die with an oath on your lips. God pity the man who has reached the point where he is forced to say, "I cannot quit! I cannot quit!" O my friends, let us put the brakes on our natures and say, "I will quit! I will quit! I will drink no more! I will curse no more! I have drunk my last drop! I have sworn my last oath!" Let's settle this question at once, before it is too late. You have no time to throw away. You need not gather any more momentum. The momentum some of you have will run you on and on, until you have made the final leap and are gone forever. Your appetite for whiskey could not be stronger. The appetite of your lustful nature is such that you are debauched from head to foot. On and on men go, until they wake up to a realization that they are going down the steepest grades of their lives, and their feet will not reach the brakes.

In a meeting in Atlanta several years ago, I preached on this subject one night, and a commercial man, who was in Atlanta just for the night, happened to come into the tabernacle, attracted there by the music; after hearing my sermon, though not affected by it very much, he went to the Kimball House and retired for the night. He came to me the next morning, agitated and thoroughly alive to the awfulness of his condition. He said to me, "Mr. Jones, I went to sleep last night without very much thought about my condition. I could not have been sleeping long, when I dreamed the most fearful dream of my life. I

dreamed I was on top of the highest hill I ever saw. I thought I was drawn irresistibly down its side, and the farther I went, the faster I went, until I reached a momentum that was horrible in its swiftness. I tried to stop and scream to my friends who were standing by, to help me. Just as I was reaching the bottom of the hill, where I realized I would be crushed and lifeless, in trying to scream for help, I awakened myself, and as I lay in a cold perspiration, trembling all over, I realized that God had given me the vision to show me my real condition. I lay awake the balance of the night, thinking of the awful downgrade of sin I was on, and wondering if it was too late, if every brake on my nature would refuse to work."

Look here, friends! Let's stop before it is too late. I tell you, I verily believe if I had not stopped at my father's dying-couch, it would have been my last opportunity. I believe that right then and there, my only chance to stop and recover myself would have been gone forever. Blessed be God! I made the stop. That was the turn-table, right there, and on it I rolled my engine, and turned around, and I am moving the other way, and I trust with a momentum that will sweep me into the kingdom of God, by and by.

"He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to the death" of his intellect. I believe that men sin against their intellects until their minds can no more grasp a Scriptural truth than they can make a world. In Georgia, my own state, in one of the towns, a lawyer of great legal ability comes out to hear me each time I preach in his city. On one occasion after I had preached there, he came up to me and said, "You seem to be candid and honest, and I like to hear you preach. But the gospel you preach is the veriest nonsense to me. I can see nothing in it." That poor fellow had sinned

and stabbed his intellect until a lie seemed to be a truth to him, and the truth a lie.

"He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to the death" of his own soul. Ah, me! I can understand when a man has sinned his conscience to death, sinned his sensibilities to death, and destroyed his power of resistance, and sinned his reason away. But when you tell me that sin will kill the soul, when it comes to the death of the soul, then I stagger back, and am lost in wonder and in dread.

The death of the soul! Take these words—"death," "eternal"! These words are the most dreadful in our language, but coupled together, what a compound! Eternal death! What does it mean? The death of the soul!

The death of the body! I see this body. I have walked up to the couch of a dying friend and stood over him as death was doing his work on his body. I have watched him closer, as death came upon him. I have watched the glare of his eyes, the twitching of the muscles of his face, and the jerking of the nerves and the heaving of his bosom, and I have walked off, and shut my eyes in horror and said, "O death, how cruel thou art." But thank God! temporal death is not eternal death.

Eternal death, what is it? Does it mean an everlasting glare of the eye, an everlasting jerking of the muscles, an everlasting twitching of the nerves, an everlasting heaving of the bosom? Is it to die forever, and yet never die?

Thank God! there is no death to a good man. On my first pastorate a good man died. Death robbed him of his flesh and strength, day after day, and month after month. I walked into his chamber the day before he died, and I saw that death had stripped him of almost every ounce of his strength. I can

never forget how death had done its work. The morning death walked into the door, and struck him the last fatal stab, he looked it in the face and pushed his bony hand out before him, and as death made the final stab at him, he bared his bosom and, raising his hand said, "Life eternal! eternal life!" and swept out of the body, and was gone forever. I said, "Blessed be God, for eternal life." How I love the thought of eternal life, and I cannot live with any other thought.

Many years ago I tiptoed into my father's parlour one morning, and they said to me, "Be quiet, your mother is dead." I was not old enough to understand what that meant, but I walked up to the casket and looked at my precious mother's face, pale in death; she looked paler and sadder than I had ever seen her. When they removed the lid, my father kissed her, and my elder brothers and I kissed her, and I said, "Precious mother's lips are so cold." She has been buried in the state of Alabama more than thirty years, and if I were to go down there to-morrow and dig the earth off of my mother's body, and disinter her bones, I could gather them all in my hands, and as I stood there looking at all there was left of my mother, I could say, "Great God! is that all that is left of my precious mother?" But standing there, looking at these bones, my knees smiting together, and I in despair, all at once a voice would speak audibly in my ear, saying,

"This corruptible must put on incorruption; this mortal must put on immortality," and I would look up and say, "Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Death to a sinner! What is it? Here he is, bound hand and foot, without power to move, and here comes a venomous reptile and approaches closer and closer.

He looks at its approach, and it comes closer, and it begins to coil around his limbs and around his body, and in the cold embraces of the venomous reptile, he shudders, and when the snake makes its last coil around his body, and draws back its head, for a fatal stab, he looks down its mouth and sees the fangs of damnation and death. The snake recoils a moment and then plunges its fangs into its victim. Then, in the pangs of agony and death, he dies forever.

Death to a Christian! What is it? The snake approaches a Christian. He does not appear to be able to get out of its way, but just as it reaches him Jesus Christ puts out His hand, and takes hold of the head of the snake, pries its mouth open, takes out the fangs right before the eyes of the Christian, and when the serpent draws back for the last attack, the Christian shouts,

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” and leaps out of the body forever.

Let us give ourselves to God and begin to live the life of the righteous man, the life that we wish to live through all eternity.

VI

“ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE”

“Escape for thy life.”—GENESIS xix : 17.

I HAVE but three questions that I would put to any man who is an accredited minister of the gospel, preaching to-day. The first question would be, “Are you posted on the subject you are discussing? In other words, do you know what you are talking about?” When that question was satisfactorily answered I would put another one: “Do you mean kindly to me in what you say?” This question satisfactorily answered, I have but one more, and that is this, “Do you live by what you preach?”

On that first question, is the speaker posted on the subject he is discussing—does he know what he is talking about?—I leave you to determine that.

Next, “Do you mean kindly to me?” The God that can look through and through every fibre of my being, knows that I have naught against any human being that walks the face of the earth. I have nothing but good will toward my fellow man.

“He that sayeth he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness, even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

The next and last, “Do you live by what you

preach?” Any sensible man knows that a man that throws as many stones as I do cannot afford to live in a glass house—any man who has good common sense knows that. A man that preaches like Sam Jones has got to live right; there’s no doubt about it. Religion or no religion, a man that preaches as close to men as I do has got to live right to have any influence over men.

These three questions, “Do you know what you are talking about?” “Do you mean kindly to me?” and “Do you live by what you preach?” satisfactorily answered, I throw open the doors of my heart, and bid the preacher come in.

This is a wonderful Book from which we preachers get our texts; it goes back to the beginning of all things, and forward to the end of all things. On the first page of Genesis, I read of my own origin and of the origin of creation. God stopped a moment to tell me from whence I came, and ever and anon for four thousand years He breaks the silence of eternity, and speaks out to me, warning me of my duty and destiny. I believe in this Book. I believe it is the Word of God. I have never attempted on any occasion to prove that the Bible is true. This much I can say, I can look man and devils in the face and say, that as far as my ability and facility for testing this Book have gone, they give it perfect truth at every point, and I would be a fool to say it is not true where I have no ability or facility for testing it.

I am like the good old woman with whom an infidel was trying to argue about the truth of the Bible. He said, “Madam, I can prove to your own eyes that the Bible is false.” The old woman said, “Law, I would believe the Bible before I would believe my own eyes.” The infidel said to her, “What makes you talk that way?” She replied, “These old eyes

have fooled me a thousand times, but this blessed old Book has never fooled me once."

I believe in the Bible, and from it I take this text, "Escape for thy life." God has implanted in every man's bosom an instinctive love of life. He has implanted in the bosom of every man an instinctive dread of death. We all love life and we all dread death, and we need not stop here to argue these propositions.

"All that a man hath will he give for his life." The thousands spent annually at health resorts and upon all the remedies known to materia medica, and all that is spent upon physicians and seeking for remedies for diseases, argue in the concrete how men love life and how men dread death.

There is but one thing in the universe of God that is stronger than a man's love of life and his dread of death, and that is despair—and suicide is the last retreat of despair. Man is a sort of trinity in unity. I have my moral, my intellectual, and my physical life. I know there are certain substances that are health-giving and life-perpetuating to my body. I know there are certain physical substances that will produce death to this body. I know there are certain lines of elevated thought and culture that develop and expand the mind. I know there is a so-called uncultured life that dwarfs and stupefies the intellectual nature of man. And there are certain lines of morality that are invigorating and life-perpetuating; there are also immoral lines that doom and debauch and deaden and damn all the noble and good impulses in man. In these propositions, one is as true as the other.

This text comes to us in the form of exhortation—"Escape for thy life."

When wisely understood it means, "Escape from

sin.” Poverty may harass me, grief may bereave me, disappointment may sadden me, but sin is the only thing in the universe of God that can debauch, paralyze, doom, and damn the soul of a man.

St. John defines sin to be the transgression of the law. Sin is the doing of the thing which God’s Word interdicts. Sin is the refusal to do the things that God’s Word commands. Sin is infraction of the law, and sin is lawlessness. Oh, how this country is blighted and cursed with lawlessness to-day. Both human and divine law are trampled under our feet, and every criminal in this country who goes unwhipped of justice is a menace to law and order, and a disgrace to civilization.

The perpetuation of the government of the United States depends on the faithful enforcement of law. God’s own government and God’s own throne depend upon the faithful enforcement of law. You may hang a few anarchists in Chicago every few years and think you have stamped out anarchy and communism, but if you have a law on the statute books of your state, or the municipal statutes of your town, that you do not enforce, you have anarchy set up right there. Every gambler, every lawless saloon-keeper, and every violator of the law, is a menace to the peace and good order of our land. Every saloon-keeper who throws his saloon doors open on Sunday—no matter whether side door, or back door, or front door—is a criminal, and justice, decency, and good order demand that he should be punished; and the judge and juror and mayor who does not do his best to bring such offenders to justice is *particeps criminis* to their damnable rascality.

Every dollar that a dishonest official puts in his pocket reminds him of the oath he has taken and the obligations to his fellow citizens. A mayor who draws

a salary and does not do his duty is dishonest. The policeman who draws his salary, and knowingly leaves his duty undone, is dishonest. A grand juror who takes the oath and draws his pay, and does not faithfully inquire into, and persistently present all crime is dishonest.

Law! It is the ultimatum, it is the hope of our country. It is that which God will see executed, or He, Himself, will be dethroned. If there is a human being on the face of God's earth I have a contempt for that I cannot measure, it is the official who is derelict of his duty and unmindful of his oath of office.

"Law is a rule of action prescribed by the supreme power of the state, commanding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong." I know there are men that do not like law, either human or divine. There is many a man in this country who does not like the Ten Commandments. He says, "I am sorry God said 'Thou shalt not steal,'" for there are so many things he sees lying around that he could pick up, and he is mad with God because He said it. It is not wrong to steal simply because God said, "Thou shalt not steal," but because it is wrong, God said you and I are not to steal. God said, "Thou shalt not lie." It is not wrong to lie simply because God said, "Thou shalt not lie." He said it because it is wrong to lie. God commanded you not to lie. And God cannot make a thing right or wrong by His *obiter dictum*. God forbids you to do a thing because it is wrong, and He commands you to do a thing because it is right.

The text says, "Escape for thy life," and he who escapes from lawlessness, escapes with his life. We take the law as we find it in the Word of God—the Ten Commandments. I am going to take up some

of the cardinal sins so commonly practised by men, and I am going to talk to you about them.

The first sin we will take up is the sin of profanity. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Our text reads this way, when read aright, “Escape from the sin of profanity.”

The old men are profane, and the middle-aged men are profane, and the young men are profane. Oh, the sin of profanity. We ask them what excuse they have for profanity. What is there in it? What is there in it to add to your manhood, to your integrity, to your character, or to your honour? I want to say to you a thing that burns like fire, if you have any manhood. A man who will habitually and persistently break one of God’s commandments, if you turn him loose he will break them all. Let me illustrate. Suppose I say, a man who steals will lie, will get drunk, will curse. You will say at once that is right. Now let us commence over on the other side. A man that will curse will lie and get drunk and steal. Oh, but you say, “you mustn’t come back over that way.” I have been told that it is a poor rule that won’t work both ways. I have heard that all my life. You cursing men, listen!

“Thou shalt not swear; thou shalt not steal.” You will break one, but you won’t break the other! There is money in breaking this one, and a man’s nature leans towards the dollar every time—why don’t you break it? Is it because you are honest? A fellow can get around “Thou shalt not swear.” There is not a thing in the way. But how about, “Thou shalt not steal”? He doesn’t get three steps until he strikes a sheriff, a court house, a chain gang. Do you see that? Take a swearing man. He would not hesitate to steal a young girl’s virtue, if he was not afraid

of a double-barrelled shotgun in the hands of her father. I once said, "If a man curses that is not all he will do." Afterward when I got to thinking about it, I asked myself, "Are you sure about that?" A few days after that I was riding on a train, when two men came in, travelling men, and if they happen to hear this sermon they will find themselves in the right pew, and will feel repaid for having heard me.

These two men came in and took a seat in front of me and commenced cursing and talking and talking and cursing, and directly one dropped his voice to an undertone and told his companion how he had stolen the virtue of a poor waitress at the hotel the night before. Then I said to myself, "Sam Jones, give it to them." If a fellow curses, that ain't all he will do.

What do you curse for? Is there any manhood in it? Is there any character in it? An old preacher, preaching down in Georgia, said that any man who would swear would steal. On the following day when he went to see one of the lady members of the church, her husband met him at the door and told him he could not come in because he had insulted him the night before when he said that any man that would swear would steal. "Were you in the army?" asked the preacher. "Of course I was in the army," replied this man. "Did you steal anything while you were out?" "Yes, we all stole in the army." Then the preacher said, "That's what I was talking about. A fellow that will curse at home, put him in the army and he will steal a hog, go a mile, and steal a beegum." If there was a fellow that went into the army cursing that didn't steal anything, I would like to see him. If he didn't, probably it was because they kept things locked up pretty tight when he was around.

The principal point upon which I base the assertion, if a man curses he will steal, is this—the condition

of the heart and life; a man who will persistently and habitually break one of God's commandments, if you turn him loose, will break them all.

Old men and young men stand on the streets and curse, so that mothers can't send their little boys down the streets, but that some of you cursing scoundrels will sow their little hearts full of the seeds of profanity before they can get home. If you are going to curse, go away where sweet women and little children are not known. Do like Robinson Crusoe, go to an island and put up with goats, for you are not fit for anything else but to be butted to death, and I would hate to be the goat that had the job.

But you say, “Sam Jones, the best way to look at a thing is to take it home and look at it. Did you ever curse?” “Yes, sir.” “Did you ever steal?” “Yes, sir.” “What did you steal?” “I stole the peace of my good wife's heart, and the rose from off her beautiful cheeks and the happiness from her home.” That was as far as I could go without running upon a sheriff, and like all you cursing fellows, I didn't dare to do that.

Several weeks ago in talking to my boys, I said to them, “Bob and Paul, I never want you to cause your mother one hour's sorrow and pain. Treat your father as you will, but never cause your precious mother a pang.” One of the boys said to me, “Papa, why do you always say that?” And I said to him, “Son, many years ago, I got on the train in Cartersville, and went five hundred miles to Henry County, Kentucky, and there married the prettiest, sweetest girl it has ever been my pleasure to know. I brought her home, a beautiful woman—just budding into womanhood, just eighteen years old. In two short years I drove every vestige of colour from those beautiful cheeks. I drove the sparkle from her eye

and the laughter from her lips, through my life of sin and debauchery; and though I have been a Christian man for more than thirty years, and have given my life and heart to her, trying to make every day the brighter, I have never seen those roses bloom so beautifully in her cheeks again, nor that bright lustre in her eye, nor heard that laugh, which was so free from care the day I took her from her home and loved ones in Kentucky. And, O boys, don't ever bring a pang to that precious mother's heart."

I was standing on the streets of my town one day, when some man's name was called, and I swore an oath just as the preacher passed me. I hadn't seen him before I spoke, for I never was low down enough to curse before a preacher, or a woman, even when I was drinking. The preacher put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Young man, don't swear at that man. It's just like putting coals of fire on your own head and saying, 'Coals of fire, burn some one else.'" From that day to this I have never heard a man swear that I didn't think he was putting coals of fire on his own head.

Fathers! husbands! boys! Let me say this to you. Let us be as pure and good as we would ask our mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters to be. You would not live with your wife an hour if she cursed as you do, and you would blush in shame if you were to hear your daughter swearing.

In my home town, one of the most profane men I ever knew was standing in front of his store, when his little boy of five years ran down the street, and a man put his foot out and pushed the little fellow down. The child turned around, and such oaths as escaped his lips! The father turned to the boy and said, "Is that you, Willie?" The little boy said, "Yes, father." The man turned to the circle of

friends and said, “Gentlemen, hear me, I will never swear another oath while I live.” But he had sown the seed of profanity in the heart of the boy by swearing before him, and it had already taken root. You had better have been in hell before a boy was born in your home than to live and set such an example before your children.

Let me tell you another thing. It is the height of ill manners and ill breeding to sit around hotels and railroad cars and spew your oaths out in the presence of strangers and decent people. If you are obliged to curse, go home and get under the bed, and curse it out.

They say if the devil wants to catch anything else than a swearer, he baits his hook, but if he wants to catch a profane man, he just throws the hook in without any bait, and the swearer swallows it.

“Escape from profanity.” It is disreputable, it is dishonourable, it cuts the grit from under your manhood. If you are a profane swearer, you lack that much of being a gentleman, for no gentleman is a profane swearer. Let us have it said that you can walk the streets of your city six months without hearing an oath unless some contemptible drummer comes to your town.

I repeat what I have said many times, many of our commercial travellers are the best men in the world, but a profane, wicked drummer is the greatest nuisance to the travelling public.

Oh, that we might all say, “I have sworn my last oath, I am done with it forever.”

The next sin I want to take up is the sin of Sabbath desecration. I am not a transcendentalist, but I believe in the Sabbath. You hear folks say they don’t believe in the Christian Sabbath, but that is the only kind I do believe in. Show me a man who keeps the Sab-

bath holy, and I will show you a man who keeps every day in the week holy. But show me a man who desecrates the Sabbath and I will show you a man who desecrates every day in the week.

There are men who never kept a Sabbath holy in their lives. You old country fellows! You load your wife and children into a wagon and drive over to Brother Brown's on Sunday. You and Brother Brown take your pipes and go out on the porch and discuss your business, your farming interests, and your interests of every kind, except your souls' interest, and let your children run wild like colts. Then in the evening you take your family in your wagon and drive home, you old heathen, you.

And some of you men run your saloons on Sunday, and some of you go in there and drink. The man that will go in a saloon and drink on Sunday is as low down as the fellow that sells it. It is six of one and half a dozen of the other. Pull them up before a grand jury and nine times out of ten they will swear to lies.

"Six days shalt thou labour, and the seventh thou shalt hallow it unto me." God forbid that we should have a continental Sabbath in America. Now and then you see a Dutchman, who says, "I don'd like dis American Sabbath." If you don't like what we have, why don't you go back where you came from? I would sever my head from my body before I would say a word against any foreigner who is a law-abiding citizen, but for you who come over here to bring a continental Sabbath, I have no patience. This is an American country. We have a God and a Sabbath, and we are going to stand up for them. Some of the best friends I have in the world are Germans, and many other foreigners I count among my friends. I can get along with any man who means right, and

does right. I am not pitching into nationalities, I am pitching into devilment, and I have a right to do it.

Where are our prosecuting attorneys, our grand juries, and our police force? There is not a criminal who sells whiskey on Sunday but ought to sleep in jail Sunday night and go to the chain gang Monday morning. That is one reason I am mad with the saloon-keepers; they are not satisfied to boss the people six days out of the week, twenty-four hours of the day, but in the face of law and decency and everything good, they want to desecrate God's day. The trouble with the men, this day and time, is that they haven't enough backbone. If I wanted to make one man, I would take about one hundred of the average fellows to make him out of, and I would be stingy in the use of my dirt, for fear it would give out before I had finished him.

Go to work in your town, say to your judge and jury, “If you don't put down lawlessness and crimes, I will denounce you as *particeps criminis*.” God help the preachers to do the same. The preachers all over this country have a wonderful power, but it takes religion, common sense, and grit to do the work that God really wants them to do. I fought the devils in my town, fought them to the penitentiary, and when pushing them to the wall, standing under the shadow of my own home, denouncing their lawlessness, that night they put dynamite under a building on my place, and blew it up. They wrote me a note next day, not signed, of course, telling me if I didn't shut my mouth they would put dynamite under my dwelling and blow me into eternity. I said to my wife, “What if they should dynamite our home and blow you and the children into eternity? I will leave it to you what I shall do.” I see her as she stood there, her mind

seeming to go back to the years when her husband was a drunkard and her home was ruined by whiskey; she looked up at me with a tremor of her lips and said, "Never let up on them, and if they put dynamite under our home and blow us into eternity, I would as soon go to heaven by the dynamite route as by any other route known to man."

O God, help us to stand by the right at any cost; help us to stand for that which is right, and denounce that which is wrong! to stand by our women, our children, and the good of our country. My prayer is that God will give us a patriotic citizenry, true to our country, our women, and our children. Some men imagine that the highest patriotism is to run a flag up on a mule's ear, or a pole, on the Fourth of July, or to sing, "My country, 'tis of thee," on national holidays; but I say to you, the noblest and best patriotism is the protection of the women and the children of our land, and every damnable saloon in this country is an insult to every good woman and an insult to every little innocent child in the land.

If God Almighty would take charge of the pulpits in our towns and cities, and our preachers would quit talking about the New Jerusalem, and preach more about our debauched towns and cities, we would make things hum. I often say if we would quit talking about the "sweet bye and bye," and give more attention to the "nasty now and now," there would be more doing in the gospel line.

O my God! give us a gospel of backbone, a gospel of the Ten Commandments! A gospel that will make men sober, and honest in their dealings! A gospel that will make a good husband to a good wife, a good father to his children, a good citizen to his community!

Talking about the New Jerusalem, I never preached

on heaven in my life. A few of my crowd will get there to see for themselves, but most of my crowd will never get there and will never know whether I told the truth or not. My Lord! give us a gospel of ethics—it is reformation or revolution.

Sabbath! Whenever the best people of the United States speak out against anything, it has got to go. Take the whiskey men and the brewers that run every town of any size in this country. You let the good people say, “Hold up,” and they have got to stop. The devil hasn’t got this country. God reigns, and decent people are in the majority, but the trouble is they haven’t any manhood; they won’t stand up. They are like a weasel or a ferret, they can go into a hole that will just fit their bodies, and then turn around and come out; they haven’t a bone in their bodies.

I like such men as General Mahone. Some one said to him, “General, what do you weigh?” He said, “I only weigh one hundred pounds, but ninety-five of that is solid backbone.” I like ’em in that proportion. I weigh one hundred and fifty pounds, and I want one hundred and forty pounds of that solid backbone. That gets a fellow to where he can stand alone. I never saw the day I was afraid of man. Before I got religion, I was not afraid to fight any man, but I have quit all that now. I want to say, since God Almighty has put me on the right side, I am not afraid of all the devils in hell and every man on earth. But, brother, the poorest way for a man to try to straighten out is to get mad at something a preacher says to him and try to whip that preacher. That won’t straighten anything out. You can’t make character, whipping preachers. I never see one of these town bullies saying he can whip anybody, that I don’t want to say to him, “Wait, Bud, until I get your little brother.” And I will go up the street and get a bull

pup and say to him, "I don't know where the mother of you two is, but when she sees you she will say to you, 'The little one is the bravest!'"

Some of you men have nice wives and yet you haven't spent a Sunday with them in months. You gather around the post-office or at other loafing places around town on Sunday morning, with the other fellows, and when I see you there on Sunday morning, I imagine if an old buzzard should fly over you he would look down and say, "Too much for me! Too much for me!" and would turn and fly the other way.

Some statistics say that ninety-seven per cent. of the criminals state that they took their first downward steps in Sabbath-breaking. If God lets us live to see another Sunday, let's go to church with our wives and children, and if another Sunday's sun goes down on us, let us say, "I have tried to live right this Sunday, every hour of the day."

The time has come when we have got to call a halt. The devil has got this country by the tail, pulling it to hell. The devil in this case reminds me of the little boy whose calf was running away, and he had him by the tail trying to stop him. The mother called to the boy and said, "Johnny, you can't stop that calf. Turn him loose." The little boy called back, "Mamma, I know I can't stop him, but I can slow him up some," and though the devil knows that he cannot stop God's work, he is doing all he can to "slow it up," to impede the progress of good men and women in their efforts to serve God. The majority of you men, crowding around to get your mail on Sunday, and hanging around other loafing places—aren't you a pretty gang? And the preachers up in the churches, preaching to the women and children! The churches on Sunday have about one hundred and twenty women and children and about thirty

men present. One man to every four women, and it has come to the place where the women have to do the bulk of the church work and the Christian training in the home. God bless the noble, true women, how I honour and love them for the great work they are doing for Christ and humanity. I believe in woman's work, and I have often said that I am willing for a woman to be anything she wants to be, except a father of a family of children. O men, take a stand and lead in righteousness and Christian training. Let's quit the way we have been doing.

If this old government had the conscience it should have it would put the brakes on every mail train on Sunday, and give every railroad man a day at home, and force every labouring man to spend the Sabbath with his wife and children.

I have seven dollars in my pocket. I go down the road and meet a beggar and he says, "Please, give me something." I give him six dollars, and that night he comes in where I am asleep and steals the other one. What do you think of him? God says, "I have seven days, take six and leave Me the seventh. Take six of these days to work for yourself and your family. Take the seventh for rest, and spend it with your wife and children and commune with Me." And you take the six days and go back and steal the seventh one from Him. Aren't you a dandy? If we live to see another Sunday, let's try to spend it right, for how many of us know whether we shall ever see another one?

"Escape for thy life." The next sin I will take up is the sin of gaming—gambling, horse-racing, betting, shooting craps, and playing cards. Are you a professional gambler? If so, I don't expect to reach you. If you are a professional gambler, you are a private thief.

Steve Holcomb, the mission worker of Louisville, Kentucky, told me this. He said he had gambled in forty states for thirty years, and any professional gambler in the United States would steal. I would rather you would steal my money than to get my boy in a gambling hell, and let him get a passion for gambling. I have very little hope for a fellow when he begins to gamble. God commands that

“By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread.”

There is no difference in the rich man who gambles in stocks and bonds, and the coloured man with his “come seven.” Turn both wrong side out, and they look the same.

I would rather my boy would plough all the week for a dollar than to win ten thousand dollars in gambling. That ten thousand dollars incapacitates him to make an honest dollar. It ruins his life and damns his soul for ever. But when he ploughs all the week, and at the end of the week is paid a silver dollar, he knows that that is an honest dollar, well earned. And when he comes home at night, with his dollar in his pocket, he slips off his trousers, puts them under his pillow, and the eagle on that dollar turns to a nightingale and sings him to sleep.

An honest dollar! There is something about an honest dollar that seems good to every man who earns it.

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” Horse races! God never made a man who loved a horse that could go more than I. I love to get behind him and see him go. There is something magnificent about a race horse. I love to see a horse prancing for the start. I love to see a horse come in on the home stretch, but I have not seen a horse race in more than twenty years. It is not because I don’t

like to see the horses run, but I can't stand seeing the dirty little fellow that stands around and bets on them.

The straightest road, and quickest time that is made to hell is on the race course with a blooded horse on the track. I won't have anything to do with them. I am out of the whole business, not because I don't like the blooded horses, but because I can't stand the little scrubs that go around with the horses. I have often told the men of Kentucky that they spend years of thought in breeding up their horses, and not ten minutes' thought or care on the pedigrees of their boys.

A most infernal passion, and one that carries a man like a cyclone to hell, is the love for the race course of this country, and there is little hope for a man that is allied to it. Quit it! So many of our towns have county and district fairs. What is the principal attraction? The races, of course. And if you good people are willing to patronize it, and drive your children into a whirlpool like that, go it, and you won't be in your graves long before you will have boys left behind who will curse the world. If you think horse racing is a big thing, and that it is the thing you ought to do, God Almighty have mercy on your soul! Oh, the gang that follows up the race course to bet on the races! Where will you find a more debauched, disreputable crowd?

I talk for home, I talk for God and native land. I know that the race course is degrading and disreputable. It will cut the grit from under your manhood and integrity as certain as the stars shine at night.

Some of you fellows play cards! The fellow that gets down to the old greasy deck is about gone. Young man, when you go to the gambling room,

remember God made every man for a nobler purpose than to turn out a blackleg gambler. Quit horse racing! Quit betting on cards! There has been ruin all along that course. Say right now, "I have bet my last dollar, I have thrown my last card."

Railroad man, do you gamble? You remind me of the old cow that goes out to eat grass all day, and then comes home to be milked. You work all the month for your wages, then come to the gambling hell and let them milk you. Oh, that every railroad man could say, "I have bet my last dollar, I have thrown my last card!"

"Escape for thy life!" The next sin I beg you to escape from is the sin of licentiousness.

"My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

"Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

"Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

"Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:

"That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

"For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,

"And I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,

"Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,

"In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

"And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart.

"(She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

“Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

“So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,

“I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows.

“Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

“I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.

“I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

“Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

“For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey:

“He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.

“With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

“He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

“Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

“Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

“Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

“For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

“Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”

It seems to me there is more hope for any other class of men than for the class that has debauched

itself in licentiousness. I preached in one place where the young men talked it around that the doctor said, "A man could not be virtuous and be healthy." I want to look in the face of a doctor that tells such a thing as that and say every time he says it that it is a lie, as black as hell itself. And that doctor is not fit to go into a decent house.

I love doctors; I have been mighty close to them in the past few years, in dire illness in my home, and I like a doctor next to the preacher. I believe he stands next to the preacher in his profession—but if a dirty little pill roller will tell a man that he cannot be virtuous and healthy,—how long before he will go into our homes and tell our daughters the same thing? Our daughters are made with the same natures as our sons. If he were to walk up to *our* daughters and tell them a person cannot be virtuous and be healthy, he would walk up into the mouth of a double-barrelled shotgun.

Hear me! If there is a deeper, darker hell for one than there is for another, it is for the dirty, infamous scoundrel of a husband who comes home at night from a house of infamy, and pillows his head by the side of his sweet, virtuous wife.

If your wife was untrue to you in look or word, you would sneak down to the courthouse and whine around and tell the judge and court that you wanted a divorce; and yet your wife has to live with you every day.

Once while I was in Arkansas I had a most pathetic letter from a brother preacher. He said to me, "My dear Brother Jones, my confidence in you and my love for you, make me feel that your advice to me would be very valuable at this time. I tell you with shame that my wife has become a fearful drunkard and dope fiend. She is no longer fit to associate

with my children or to preside over my home. I am broken-hearted, and I feel that my work is ruined. Please write me what to do.” I wrote him the following letter: “My dear brother, after reading your letter carefully, and with a heart full of love and sympathy for you, I have decided to give you this advice. If your wife persists in her life of debauchery, after talking with her, and praying with her, and begging her to give up her life of sin, I think the best thing for you to do is to leave her. Turn your back on her, and take your children into a new country, where they will forget that they ever had a mother.”

George Stuart, my co-worker, was in the room with me at the time, and I read him the letter before sealing and addressing it. He said to me, “Hold on, Brother Jones. How can you give that advice to any man? Think of the thousands of women over this land who are sticking to and standing by debauched, degraded, and licentious husbands, with never a word of complaint, and yet you advise this man to leave his wife, in her sorrow and sin, when she needs him more than if she was strong. Don’t send that letter. Please don’t.”

I tore the letter up, and wrote the fellow to stick to his wife and stick to God; to lean on the precious promise, “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”

There are young men who, if their mothers and sisters knew their lives as God knows them, would hide their faces in shame. One morning when I was preaching in Cincinnati, I picked up the *Enquirer* and saw that the night before, at one of the questionable houses, a man went in and applied for a room and said, “Send me the finest girl you have.” In a few minutes the girl came up to the room, and the man turned to look at her, he put his hand into his pocket

and drew his pistol, and fired it, and the girl fell to the floor. The inmates ran up to his room and asked what he had done, and he said, "That girl was my sister." I said it in Cincinnati and I will say it everywhere, that a young lady has as much right to be in a house of that kind as a young man. A man that is not as pure as he demands his wife to be is a dishonest scoundrel. A boy that won't be as pure as he wants his sister to be is a characterless dog.

Purity! I never saw the day since God saved my soul that I would not lay my head on a railroad track and let the engine cut it off before I would be untrue to the vows of the purity of my home.

I preached in an asylum where there were eleven hundred inmates who came there through licentious acts of men and women. How horrible the act, to entail evil on helpless offspring. O young man, be clean!

I haven't a word to say against those poor lost women, whose pale, sad faces you so often meet on the streets. When a poor girl has lost her virtue, she has lost all. Any man with a wife, or mother, or daughter, ought to extend a helping hand, and I say to you, no gentleman will do toward another man's wife, daughter, or sister, that which he would not have done toward his own.

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Am I right? Every poor girl in this country is somebody's daughter, somebody's sister, or somebody's mother. If you would do to some other man's daughter what you would not have him do in return to yours, you lack principle, honour, and integrity of character. Give me a pure man, and a pure boy. If you are nothing else, be pure in your life and character.

“Escape for thy life.” The last sin I beg you to run from, to escape from, is the sin of intemperance. O my God! This river, from source to mouth, is lined with human wretches enough to make the devil himself hide his face and weep with horror.

The sin of intemperance! Here is one man who can speak of that sin, who knows what he is talking about. I said in Chattanooga, Tennessee, years ago, “Nobody but a scoundrel will sell whiskey, and nobody but a fool will drink it, and if you can get it any plainer than that without cursing, I will sign it.” The next day some of the whiskey fellows abused me terribly on the streets—when I was not present. That night I said to them, “I will not take advantage of anybody by talking to their backs. No one but a scoundrel will sell whiskey, and I am going to prove it to you. All you whiskey men meet me at nine o’clock to-morrow morning, and we will go up Main Street, three blocks and turn into Ninth Street and go about two blocks, where we will see a desolate little home, where there is a poor, sad-eyed wife with one child. We will go in and sit down and I will get that little woman to tell you of the sober mechanic she married eight years ago, of how happily they lived at first, and how he commenced drinking at your saloons, and how one night he came home drunk and abused her and kicked her out into the street. Then I will ask her where her husband is, and she will tell us he is in the penitentiary for a crime he committed when drunk. And then we will put our ear to the side of this little woman, and hear the blood drip, drip from her poor aching heart, and then if you say that anybody but a scoundrel will sell the stuff that will wreck a home like that, I will take back what I said.”

When I see whiskey, like the wheels of a locomotive, running over and crushing the hearts of the women and children, I call it anything this side of hell. I will steal, I will murder for money, before I will sell one drop of that damnable stuff to make money. A train robber and a thief are gentlemen by the side of a man who will sell whiskey for money. I will prove it to you.

Riding through the West, in a moment I feel every brake on the train put in play, and the train comes to a standstill. I raise the window and start to put my head out to see what the trouble is, when a man walks up to me and says, "Your money or your life." He gets the money from each passenger on the train, bids the engineer go ahead, and we move off in perfect safety. What have we lost? A few paltry dollars that we can soon regain by honest toil. But the saloon-keeper not only takes your money, but he takes your character, your health, your position in life, and the peace of your wife, the happiness of your children, and finally lands you in a drunkard's hell forever. Can you regain that in a few short months by honest toil? Yet you seem surprised that I say a train robber is the gentleman of the two.

The saloon-keeper does not like to hear any one talk about his business. But I say it is no business. It's simply a butchery. And the best thing I can do for you is to get you out of that business, and if you don't quit it, you will go to hell as certain as God reigns in heaven. "But," you say, "Sam Jones, you are too hard on us." But I say in return, "Aren't you killing our fathers, our sons, our neighbours? Too hard on you? I am like the fellow who was going down the road with a pitchfork on his shoulder, when a great big bulldog jumped over the fence and made at him. He took his fork off his shoulder, and

pinned the dog to the ground. The owner of the dog came up to him and said, ‘What did you kill my dog for?’ ‘Well, wasn’t he trying to kill me? I was only using the weapon I had in hand on him.’ ‘But why didn’t you come at him with the other end of that fork?’ ‘Why didn’t he come at me with the other end?’ replied the fellow.”

The whiskey men are coming at us with the devil and destruction end of their business, and every time I have an opportunity I am going to hit them with the pitchfork end that pins them to the ground. Sometimes I think that I owe the dram drinker an apology, when I say nobody but a fool will touch it—really, I think a first-class fool won’t touch it, and I have a reason for saying that.

Some years ago in Gainesville, Georgia, a mechanic waked up one night in jail, and when he opened his eyes as the jailor walked into his cell, he said, “Where am I?” The jailor said, “You are in jail.” “For what?” “In jail for murder.” “Whom have I killed?” “You killed your wife.” And the fellow staggered back on the floor, utterly unconscious. In about an hour he came to himself, and cried to the jailor, “Go and get a posse of men and hang me, for I have killed the best wife that God ever gave a man.”

Five hundred men have butchered their wives in the United States this year, under the influence of this accursed stuff.

You coloured men, look at your horny hands, and go and look at your desolate homes. What is the matter? Why, it’s the stuff that you drink—and just here let me say, the poisonous stuff sold now, called whiskey, not only makes a man drunk, deadening his sensibilities, but crazes the brain, causing the poor brute who drinks it to commit nameless crimes, of

which he is totally incapable of realizing the enormity, —a stiff drink, given to one of the Texas buck rabbits, will make him stand on his hind legs and spit in the face of a bulldog.

In that great and final day, how can America face the fearful record of her legalized whiskey business? Oh, the fearful curse with which she is burdening the poor, weak man within her borders. Some of you say let whiskey alone and it will let you alone. Listen, a sober, upright citizen was walking up the street, when suddenly a wild, drunken brute rushed out of a saloon and fired off a pistol. The good man dropped dead. Did that man let whiskey alone? Did that broken-hearted wife, who came rushing down the streets when she heard her husband had been killed, leave whiskey alone? Did his little children let whiskey alone? You might as well turn a mad dog loose in the streets, and say, "Let him alone, and he will let you alone."

A prominent Christian man in one of our large cities, when approached by the secretary of the anti-saloon league and asked for a contribution of one hundred dollars to help defeat a whiskey candidate in an election soon to be held in that city, said, "Why should I give money to the temperance cause? Whiskey has never hurt me, and I feel sure it never will. I have a wife and only one child, a daughter, who are sober, upright, Christian women, and I do not know the taste of an intoxicant." His wife and daughter were expected home that day from a trip abroad. A few hours after making this remark, he was handed a telegram which read, "Railroad disaster; your wife and daughter killed. Come at once." He rushed to the railroad office, and found that the wrecking train was to go out in a few minutes, and he was allowed to go with the crew. When he arrived

at the place of the accident, he found at one end of the train his wife and daughter, lying dead and mangled on the side of the railroad. At the other end, seated on the ground near the demolished engine, was the drunken engineer, whose beclouded brain had been unable to read his orders aright. Did this man let whiskey alone? Did whiskey let him alone?

In conclusion, hear me just a minute. If there is a man that would lift you above these sins, and make you an honour to this country, a blessing to your family, a joy to yourself, I am that man, and I have a right to speak. At twenty-one years of age I was admitted to the bar of my state to practise law in the courts of Georgia. No boy ever started out with brighter prospects. At the very court by which I was licensed to practise law, the first week of my legal life I had plenty to keep me busy. The day after court adjourned I boarded the train at my home in Cartersville, went up through Bowling Green and Louisville, Kentucky, took the short line between Louisville and Lexington, and got off at Eminence, a small town, forty miles out of Louisville. I rode four miles out into the country, and married a sweet, pure Kentucky girl. I carried her to my Georgia home, and in the three long, dreary, hopeless years that followed, I saw the roses fade from her cheek, and the light of hope die in her eyes. I look back over those three years of debauchery, and it seems a weird dream of the past, and I don't understand it. Many a night I have come home in the debaucheries of my wayward life, and in the early hours of the morning waked from a drunken stupor, and found my wife kneeling at my side, her face bathed in tears, crying, “O God, save my poor, drunken, wayward husband.” God sent an angel to bless our home, and permitted it to

remain with us nineteen months, to cheer the broken-hearted mother. When it was nineteen months old He took it to His home. I remember one day when I started rudely from my fireside, the little child got hold of my finger, and looked up so pleadingly at me. I have thought of that day many a time, and have thought if I ever get to heaven, I will beg her pardon for the treatment of that night. That was the only child that God ever gave me that looked up into my face and saw anything but a sober man.

On I went, until at last, coming to my father's dying couch, he called me up to him, just before he died, and taking my hand, he looked up into my face and said, "My poor, wayward, godless, ruined boy, promise me that you will give your heart to God, and meet me in heaven, and that you will make a good husband to this brokenhearted wife." I stood there convulsed, quivering from head to foot, and looking at my dying father, I rallied the last vestige of my remaining manhood, and said, "Father, I make the pledge." That was twenty-six years ago, and I can look God and man in the face and say that every step I have taken from that day to this has been toward God and right.

Some of these days I hope to grasp my noble father's hand and say, "Father, I have been able to keep the pledge I made you in your dying hour, and here I am, to live with you forever."

The battle of life will soon be over for me, but if I had a thousand lives I would wear them out in honour of God, who has done so much for me. Some of these days, all worn out with labour, I am going to meet that father in a better world.

O my countrymen, as you listen to me, can't you make the start? Can't you give up your life of sin,

your life of profanity, your life of Sabbath desecration, your life of licentiousness, your life of intemperance, and promise God you will heed His warning, when He says to you:

“Escape for thy life.”

VII

THE PRODIGAL SON

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee."—
LUKE XV : 18.

YOU recognize this immediately as a selection from the parable of the Prodigal Son. Some one has said that this parable carries on its very face the fact that its author is divine. If there were no other proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ, this parable alone would entitle Him forever to the name of God-man. How different He is from all other authors. I have been charmed with Dickens and Thackeray; I have been delighted with Shakespeare, in the years that are past, but how different is my divine Lord from them.

Look at Dickens, how wonderfully he portrays human nature. Take Shakespeare. How he flashes the light of his genius into every crevice and corner of human nature. Take Thackeray. He will lead you down to the lowest depths, then forward again to all his former elevation. Shakespeare and Dickens show you every downward step. Thackeray could show you the road, in all its infamy, which leads to hell forever.

But my divine Lord, in this parable, not only takes this young man from an altitude where angels could live, but He shows every downward step, through the very gates of hell, and then takes him by the hand and leads him upward and onward, till He sets him

down in his father's home, saved and blessed forever. And I worship the life of my divine Lord, not only because He can show me the things that lead me off, but how blessed it is to know that He goes to the very gates of hell and picks up poor mortals, like you and me, and shows us every step back to the good and to God and to eternal life.

This parable is a perfect picture, and I simply point out the features of the picture before us, and pray God we may see the picture in all its beauty, glory, and power.

I never read the parable but that it does not become to me a mirror that reflects my whole image, from head to foot. It is the photograph of so many men to-day, and many of us looking at it can see our own pictures.

And oh, when we hold up God's mirror in this parable of the prodigal son, are we surprised to find all along through the description, that the mirror simply pictures ourselves? I pray God that we may see in this mirror not only ourselves as prodigals, but that we may see a father's outstretched arms to save us.

I propose, in the discussion, to modernize the parable so it will be practical.

"And he said, a certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," and immediately that father "divided unto them his living." I have heard preachers say mighty hard things about this boy. I have heard them say he was the worst boy in the neighbourhood; that he was prodigal, dissipated, wasteful, and vicious.

I don't know where they get such an idea about the boy. The very face of the parable shows the contrary, and shows us that he was good and honest and trustworthy. The facts are these. This young

man, being the younger brother, in the eyes of the law had no claim on his father; had no right to demand anything. The elder brother inherited the fortune, and here is the younger brother saying, "Give me the portion that falleth to me," and the Book says, "He divided unto them his living."

Now will you believe me, brother, when I say that a father who had sense enough to accumulate a fortune, and who had sense enough to take care of it, even if he inherited it, had too much sense to turn over a vast amount of property to a wayward, prodigal son, when that boy had no legal claims upon it, and without even a word of remonstrance, without a word of hesitancy, or without a word of advice? If the young man was a prodigal, the older man was a very foolish father.

"A certain man had two sons. And the younger said, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," and immediately "he divided unto them his living," showing clearly, upon the very face of the parable, that up to that hour the father had the utmost confidence in his boy. That father had reason to believe the boy would use this vast property aright; the boy had given every evidence that he would do, and be what his father expected of him. Immediately "he divided unto them his living," and not many days after that the boy left home.

I imagine the boy was very busy the last few days he stayed at home. He was gathering up his flocks, his herds, his camels, his cattle, his horses, and his servants, and whatever his inheritance was, he was busily engaged in gathering it together.

"The younger son gathered all together, and took his journey"—and we may imagine that after all preparations had been made for the journey, and all his inheritance had been gathered together, we will

say on Monday morning, he drove his immense caravan out in front of the old homestead and gave orders, "Halt a moment," and the caravan was brought to a halt, and amid the neighing of the horses, and the bleating of the sheep and cattle, and the hum of the servants' voices, the boy stepped into the front gate of the old homestead and walked up on the porch and took his father's hand to tell him good-bye. That father stood trembling, and looked in his second-born son's face, and no doubt the tears coursed down his cheeks, as he said good-bye to him. I imagine that when he turned to his precious old mother, she just put her arms around his neck and imprinted a hundred kisses of love and kindness upon the face of her boy. And that boy turned his back on home, and father, and mother, and walked out of the front gate, and began his journey.

On they moved until the sun was going down in the West. Coming to a beautiful place, they decided to spend the night. They pitched their tents, fed their stock, provided for themselves and all that company, and about nine o'clock this young man retired. As he pillowed his head and looked up at the heavens sprinkled with stars like a swarm of golden bees, he thought to himself, "Well, this is the first night I have ever spent from under the roof of the old homestead. This is the first night I have ever been away from my mother's voice, and my mother's audible prayer."

I have wished many a time in my heart that that boy, before he went to sleep that night, had made up his mind and said, "To-night I will sleep in this tent, but by the grace of God I will right about in the morning and go back home." You note that I said he retired about nine o'clock. No boy, just one night's journey from precious mother's prayers and father's

counsel, goes very far into sin the first night he is out.

Ah, me! if he had just kept that resolve and had returned to his home the next morning, how many heartaches he would have shunned, how much trouble, how much care, and how much pain he would have avoided! When the sun had gone down the second day, he would have been back home, where mother and father, and home, and peace would have been his, and he could have said in time and through eternity, "I never spent but one night from under the roof of the old homestead."

Instead, he slept through the night, and in the morning orders were given, and off they drove. And on and on they drove, until the second night. And the same scene is repeated. The boy retired, and I have thought to myself that I could hear the boy say to himself, "Well, I made a mistake in not deciding the question last night, but I will decide it to-night, and by the grace of God, in the morning, as soon as the sun rises on this old world I will right about and go back home." If he had said that he would have been but three nights from under the roof of the old homestead. He had travelled two days and camped out two nights and two more days' travel would have put him back home. But he is two days away from home.

See how he is going off on his journey, each night repeating these scenes and incidents, until Saturday night. He has sought and found a beautiful camping-ground, and here he spends his Sabbath. Yet he has not forgotten the old home and mother and father.

I have wished many a time that when the Sabbath sun arose on his camp, as he looked on its beauty and splendour as it poured down upon him, he could have said to himself, "This is the first time the Sabbath sun ever rose upon me away from father and mother

and home." I have wished that that night, as he retired, and was thinking about home and father and peace and plenty, he had said, "This is the first Sabbath I have ever spent away from home, and by the grace of God I will right about to-morrow morning, and I will go back home, and when the next Sabbath's sun shall rise, it shall rise on me at the old family homestead."

If that boy had said that, how many heartaches he would have shunned, how many tears, and how much fearful anguish, and worst of all, how much disgrace he would have escaped, if he had started back home the next morning.

But on he drives and we imagine at the end of the second week he drives into a beautiful, fertile country. Its very trees and hills, its valleys and springs and flowers charm him as he looks upon the scene and says, "I believe I will look out for a plantation and settle here." "But," he thinks, "if I settle here it won't be a month till father and mother will come down here to see me, and interfere with my plans and disarrange my programme, and the fact of the business is, the only reason I wanted to take my part of the inheritance was that I might go off into some other country and manage my affairs at will; and after I have arranged them perfectly, then I can bring father and mother into the secret of my success."

That boy was just as honest in that as that man who is a moderate drinker, and who is as certain that he will never be a drunkard as he is that he breathes. That boy was honest. Nothing vicious in him. He had everything that he wanted to be and do planned out fully in his mind. He had that plantation and everything a perfect picture, to be fulfilled and brought into actual facts.

On he drives until, I imagine, about the middle of the next week, when he drives into another fertile country, and he looks on the right and on the left and says, "Here is another beautiful section. I believe I will buy and settle here," but maybe the thought occurs to him, "There is a post-office here in the settlement, and I won't be here two weeks before I shall get a letter from mother, telling me how to do everything; and father will write a great long letter, and he will have a lot of advice to give me, and the fact of the business is, I don't want any advice from the old folks. If I had wanted their advice I would have bought a farm next to them. But I want to be somebody, and I want to do something for my own self. I'll make the old folks proud of me some day, see if I don't."

He wanted to be somebody, and on and on he drove. And he went into a far-off country, and after reaching that far-off country, he bought half a million acres of beautiful land, built a magnificent residence, and was lord of all that country.

No, it doesn't say that. It says that in that far-off country he "wasted his substance in riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land."

The boy moved off in style. I imagine that the natives, all along the line of the route, were astonished at his pageant and at his caravan. I imagine that when they met at the different places in the community there for the next month, he was the subject of conversation. "Who was that young man that passed? Did you see that magnificent young man and his train following him?"

I imagine if the young man stopped at a country home to spend the night that the next morning, when he asked for his bill, the kind host said, "Oh, sir,

I don't charge you a cent." But the young man said, "I am no pauper, just give me my bill. You can't insult me by giving me a night's lodging."

And on he moved, and in style too, he did. I imagine if cash got a little scarce with him, he could sell a servant or a camel. There was no need that he should be a pauper, as he moved on in his magnificence. When he got to that far-off country he spent the last dollar of his inheritance in riotous living.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land." Did you ever notice how scarce everything is when you haven't anything yourself? Why, there is always a fearful money panic all over the country when a fellow has spent his last dollar. It is astonishing how a whole neighbourhood can run out of a certain article at one time. Did you ever notice it?

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land." It is astonishing that when a man has plenty of money, everybody will take money to him and ask him to keep it for them, but when a poor fellow hasn't a dollar in the world, he can't get a dollar. There are hundreds of people who have more money than they know how to use, and yet there are others running to them with money, saying, "Keep this for me and use it as you please, until I call for it." And the day of troubles comes, and that same man, under financial stringency, will break and go under, and these same people who have been running to him with their money won't speak to him when they are passing. Why? When a fellow has plenty, there is always plenty around him; and when he spends all, it looks as if nobody else around him had anything.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land."

Let us run back a few minutes and take the practical lesson we find in the parable. Every boy and girl, and every man and woman who read these lines, have had a certain advantage in their life. They have looked up into the face of God and said, "Give me my spiritual heritage that cometh to me," and God has turned over our spiritual heritage to us. What did He give us? He gave us a good mother's counsel, a kind father's advice, a good mother's prayers, a kind father's love. He gave us our Sunday-school training, He gave us a tender heart, He gave us the precious Bible to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. He gave us the ministry of His word. He gave us His divine providence, to shed its glory and its beauty all around us, in every step of life. Oh, what an inheritance God turns over to every one of us in our young days!

"Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." And he started off into a far-off country, and as he went, he scattered all his spiritual heritage. Mother gave you her Bible, gave you the influences of the divine spirit, God turned over to you the memory of a good mother and her prayers, and the father's advice and the Word of God, the institutions of the church and a tender heart. God gave you an inheritance that would make an angel rich.

Where is it to-day? There are men who have thrown away the memory of a precious mother's prayers. Gone! Gone! Gone! There are men who have forgotten their godly father's counsel and have thrown it to the breezes. There are men whose precious mother gave them the Word of God and said, "My son, make this Book the mainstay of your life." Where is the Bible your mother gave you? Where

is the tender heart of your youthful days, that God gave you as a spiritual heritage? Scattered in prodigality, and all there is to show for it is a heart so hard that God's Word and power can never penetrate it again. Where are the blessed instructions of the Sunday-school? Gone! Gone! Gone!

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in the land." To a person who has spent all in riotous living there is nothing left. You can turn to that poor, wretched man and say, "There is the Bible," but he will answer, "It is not my Bible. It was mine once, but it is a sacrilege for me to put my hands on it now." "Well, remember your mother." "Oh, my precious mother! But she has forgotten me in my wild, godless life." I ask a man, "Where are the precious Sunday-school lessons, and where is your faith in God?" and he replies, "I have forgotten them all. I have scattered them to the winds in my dissipation."

I say to another man, "Where are the kind words of your good father?" "They are all forgotten," and oh, the infinite misery and desolation and want of the soul that has no Bible, that has no precious mother's memory, no father's advice, no blessed influences! All gone forever! Gone! "He spent his all in riotous living."

A presiding elder in our conference once told me that at the same college from which he graduated there was a young man who entered with him. They graduated together. After graduating, he did not meet the young man again for fifteen years. He said, "One day I was driving in my buggy through my district, and I passed a grocery store in a little country place, and just at that time a pale, haggard, ragged, desolate man walked out of that grocery. I drove on, and he caught up with me and ran to the buggy and

said, 'You don't know me, but we graduated together and joined the same church the same night. I lived right for a while, but I got into bad company and commenced to dissipate, and I went from bad to worse, and I am just recovering from a four weeks' spree. I am almost in a fit of delirium tremens this moment, but I want to tell you something. Just as I walked into that grocery and called for a drink to steady my nerves, I could not pour it out of the bottle into the glass, my nerves were so unsteady. The barkeeper poured it out for me, and I took it in both hands and carried it to my lips. And while I was holding the glass to my lips, I felt my good old mother's hand come down on my head, and she seemed to say:

“ ‘ Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep ;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.’ ”

I dropped that glass out of my hands and walked out of the store just as you came along. Mother has been in heaven twenty years, but she just put her hands on me as she did when she was living.’ ” That precious old mother! She followed her boy right down to the gates of hell and put her hands on his head with a prayer; but that man went on drinking and drinking that day, and was carried out a corpse that night, gone forever!

A spiritual heritage! Oh, I may waste money and stocks and bonds, and thousands in investments, and wealth, and father may turn over to me my portion of the inheritance, and I may waste all of that, and be left a financial bankrupt, and I may not be eternally ruined. But if by prodigality and wickedness and wastefulness a man ruthlessly throws away his

mother's Bible, his father's counsel, and the blessed recollections of a pure heart, and scatters them to the breezes, he is an eternal bankrupt and his very appearance makes the angels tremble and good men weep over the eternal bankruptcy of his soul.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." It is said hunger knows no law. "And he began to be in want." The very object of the devil is to strip us of every vestige of our property, and then make us steal, and lie and do a thousand things to get something to live on. The devil made that young man steal money to take his girl to ride, to pay for theatre tickets, and to indulge in other extravagances of life, and finally when the sheriff took hold of him, the devil turned around and left him in despair. It is astonishing how men can have anything to do with the devil after they learn his infinite meanness.

And when he had spent all, and the famine came, he came to be in want, and want knows no law; no law of respectability, no law of morality. "He began to be in want, and bound himself to a citizen of that country. And he sent him into the field to feed swine." He was a Jew, you recollect. I reckon that's about as low down a job as a Jew was ever put at. A Jew doesn't have very much affinity for a live or a dead hog, and I am about nine-tenths Jew myself, along that line. I think there is a good deal in the old adage that the more hog we eat the more we get like a hog intellectually. There may be something in it, so far as I know.

"And he sent him into a field to feed swine." And then what? "And he fain——" Listen, he would have been delighted if he could have received enough of the husks with which he fed the swine to fill himself!

Now what did the devil do to him? Put him to feeding swine. What did he feed to the swine? Husks! What did he eat himself? Husks! Did you ever notice that just what you feed other folks on, in your meanness, the devil will make you eat? Here is a barkeeper who is selling liquor and making drunkards, and nine-tenths of the barkeepers die drunkards. Just what you poke down other people's throats is what the devil will poke down yours.

It is a law in the moral universe of God that is as inevitable as life itself. Here is a man who gambles and wins money, and that is all he does. And the devil will see to it that he raises up a friend for that gambler, whose only business is gambling and winning money. And every dollar he has won from other people, the devil makes the other gambler win back.

"And he fain would have filled himself with the husks the swine did eat." He fed husks to the hogs and then ate husks himself. Here is a woman whose particular business is tattling through the settlement and getting up difficulties between the neighbours. The first thing you know every neighbour she has begins to tattle about her. Just what you feed other people, the devil will feed you. Here is a fellow who will not pay his debts, and he goes around saying, "Everybody owes me and I cannot collect a cent." It is astonishing how this law of the moral universe works. I believe I will treat my neighbours right, for I surely want to be treated right myself. I will feed others on nobler, better things, because I want the noblest, best things to come to me, and these are the only conditions upon which I can obtain them.

"He fain would have filled himself with the husks the swine did eat." And listen, "And no man gave unto him." And now it is said, "And when he came

to himself." Look here. What was the matter with that boy? Was he crazy? Was he living under a mental delusion? He was from the happiest home a boy ever left, where there were affluence, wealth, and love. There he was, after he had spent all he had—"he began to be in want, and joined himself to a citizen of that country." He became a servant, and one day he came to himself. What was the matter with that boy? Was he crazy? Look here. Right here in this parable is one of God's most fearful truths in the universe.

At twenty-four years of age I waked up to a living consciousness of what I was and whither I was going. My life from that moment to this has been no more the same life I led before than if I had been two different men. I came to myself. Do you mean to tell me if I had been clothed in my right mind that I would have done as I did? Do you mean to tell me that had my eyes been opened, and had I seen as I ought to have seen, that I would have gone to such depths and lengths? No, sir! I tell you all you would have to do to set right many a man in this world would be to get him to come to himself. There is not a man going wrong in this whole land who, if you can make him see what he is, and where he is going, will not want to change his course.

"And he came to himself." Now listen, brother! Listen how he talks. He begins to talk like a fellow with some sense.

"I will arise and go to my father . . . how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger."

But you say, "How far are you from home? How much money have you got to pay your way back home?" "Not a cent." "Where are your shoes?" "I haven't any." "Where is your hat?" "Got

none." "Where is your coat?" "I haven't a coat." "A thousand miles from home, not a cent, coatless and hatless and shoeless, you talk about going home?" "Yes, sir." Suppose that poor fellow had done as many of us would have done, stopped to consider. We would have said, "It is so far; I've got no shoes, I've got no money to pay my way. I haven't a dollar to buy a crumb on my way, and I just don't believe I will go at all." But that was not what this young man said. He said, "I am perishing, and yet I have a father whose very hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and money or no money, shoes or no shoes, hat or no hat, fit or no fit, I'm going back home. God helping me, I will start back at once."

When that boy started back home, there was a wonderful difference between his going and his coming. You let a fellow start the wrong way, and he's a whale. And if there is anything bigger than a whale, he's that. All along the route he was magnificent. Every man along that route of the prodigal son had to be particular in speaking to him and addressing him. He was as sensitive as he could be, and he would get mad with anybody, and when that fellow wanted to give him a night's lodging, he would have liked to whip him about it. But the boy is coming back now. You can't hurt his feelings. Oh, me! I tell you it makes a great deal of difference which way a fellow's going, whether he is headed to the hog-pen or away from it.

I have had wives say to me, "Brother Jones, I am going to bring my husband to hear you to-night, and please be particular and don't say anything to hurt his feelings. I had him out once before and the preacher said something that hurt his feelings, and he hasn't been near a church since." That fellow's headed for the hog-pen; that's where he's headed. I

could put the dogs on the trail for that husband, and sooner or later I would track him to the hog-pen. You have got to be mighty particular with a woman's husband when he is headed toward a hog-pen. The Lord have mercy on us!

He moved off in style. He could pay his own way and he asked no man any odds—but now he's coming back. I imagine when that boy passes along by the house where he kicked up that row when the kind fellow wanted to give him a night's lodging, that when he sees it about half a mile ahead he gets over the fence and leaves the road and takes to the woods. I imagine that he goes on until night overtakes him, without a cent in his pocket. He goes the back way up to a poor negro cabin, and says to the old negro woman, who is standing in the door, "I wish, Auntie, you would give me just a little bread. I haven't had a thing to eat to-day and haven't had a cent to pay for anything. But what you give me, you will not lose, for I have the best father a boy ever had, and if you ever pass my father's house, you shall be repaid for this kindness."

He takes the cold pone of bread and goes a little farther on, and turns out into the woods, and rakes up a big pile of leaves, lies down, and covers himself with them, and sleeps until morning. And then in the morning he gets up and strikes out again, and I imagine the people of the neighbourhood say to one another, "Did you see that ragged, dejected young man going up the road the other day?" "Yes, I saw him." "Well, I think his face—there was something about his face that reminded me of that fellow who went down with that grand pageant a few years ago." "Oh, no, that's not the same fellow. I saw him. He was moving in style. This can't be the same fellow." "Yes, but I tell you, he was the same

fellow. There was something in his eyes that made me know he was the same."

Look here! Here's a young man, mark his expression! Ten years ago, twenty years ago, he was the pride of his city, the pride of his state, perhaps the pride of a fond mother's heart. Last week some one who had not seen him for fifteen years comes again to where he was, and there comes along the streets a poor, besotted, desolate wretch, and this visiting gentleman who was once a citizen says to his companion, "Who is that fellow?" "Why, that's the son of Colonel So-and-so. Didn't you know him?" "Yes, but that can't be the same fellow. Why, I used to know him. He was one of the leading business men of this town and community. Why, that can't be this vagabond and besotted wretch. Surely that can't be the same fellow." "I don't care how he looks, that's the very same fellow." My! My! how sin changes a man in this world.

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him."

And on this fellow goes. I imagine if a mill boy in a cart lets him get in and ride a few miles he is most grateful to him. And on and on he goes, until one day, worn out and weary and desolate, with scarcely power enough to make another mile, all at once he comes in sight of the old homestead. As he views it, the tears coursing down his cheeks, in penitence and sorrow he says, "Oh, how sorry I am that I ever left such a home." He stops, I imagine, and sits down on the root of a big old oak tree and gazes towards the homestead and says, "I am not worthy to go another step toward that home. If I could just die here, and father would find me and give me a burial-place in the old family burying ground back

of the house that's the greatest honour that I could ask." He sits and looks ashamed, afraid to go another step. But thank God, the Book tells us, "And his father saw him a great way off." That father was looking for that boy, and his eyes, the eyes of a kind, loving father, saw him a great way off. They were the eyes of love and mercy.

"And he ran to him," and they were legs of mercy that carried that father. And his father ran up to him and spoke to him and they were words of mercy that the father had for his boy. His father threw his arms around him, and they were arms of mercy that encompassed that poor boy. And his father kissed him, and they were kisses of mercy that he imprinted on his boy's face. And the poor boy turned his face for the first time up to his father and exclaimed with a breaking heart:

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; let us eat and be merry. For this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; was lost and is found."

Blessed be God! How that reminds me of the great wealth God gave me, His poor, wretched, ruined son, fourteen years ago. I had reached the point where I saw that I was not worthy to go one step farther toward God. And I broke down and said, "Lord God, I perish forever, because I am so unworthy." And the first thing I knew, His arms were around me and words of mercy were whispered in my ear, and the gracious Father's eyes were looking down into my face and I have been astonished, not only that God Almighty should pardon such a way-

ward man, but that He would ever let me come into His house and be His son. Blessed be God! Blessed be God!

Let each one of us say, "I will arise and go to my father, for there is a royal welcome awaiting me." The angels of God hover around you, and when they hear you say, "I will arise and go to my father," every angel will catch up your words and hurry back to heaven and say, "The dead is alive, the lost is found."

You, who have been wandering so long, turn back to the blessed God and to the old homestead, where His peace and love reign supreme, where spiritual plenty shall abide forever.

VIII

BURDENS

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."—PSALMS lV: 22.

THE greatest curiosity that could be presented to this world would be an unburdened heart—a heart perfectly free from every care, every burden, and every anxiety. Four thousand years ago a wise man of God said, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Just as naturally as the sparks fly upward from the burning wood, so man is subjected to trouble. And after all, the great question of the philosopher is not how many troubles we have, but it is wisdom to classify troubles, and then to learn what to do with them.

I grant you there are a great many imaginary troubles in the world. We are always looking for something we shall never see, something that is not coming to us, and always expecting something that will never happen. That is human nature.

I reckon the first thing we had better do, because it has much to do with the text under discussion, is to classify our troubles. The imaginary ones we will call one class, and the real ones we will call another class.

Imaginary troubles! Home-made troubles, we sometimes call this class. And home-made troubles are like home-made jeans and home-made shoes—they outlast any other sort and frequently last until

we are heartily tired of them. Now what do I mean by home-made troubles, borrowed troubles, imaginary troubles? I can illustrate it better than I can present it in any other way.

Here is a good mother, a kind-hearted woman, to say nothing of her good common sense. Her children from fourteen years down come in and say to her, "Mamma, let us hitch up old John and drive over to Mrs. Brown's this afternoon." And the kind-hearted mother says, "All right, children." Now this mother knows perfectly well that John is safe and can be trusted with the children. Every man in the community knows the horse and what a valuable animal he is because is so gentle and so trustworthy. Some of the children go to the lot and climb up his legs. He is perfectly reliable and they can hitch him up to a sleigh, or a buggy, or a wagon, and really when the children come and play about him in the lot, he puts his foot down, and seems to shake it to see if any of the little fellow's fingers or toes are under his foot. Old John has learned to love the children and seems to think as much of them as the mother does. And this is the horse that the children hitch up, and they start on their way rejoicing.

The mother goes on with her work, thinking nothing of her children, until the clock strikes four, the hour they promised to be home. But when the clock strikes, the mother looks up and says to herself, "My children have not come back and they promised to come back promptly at four o'clock. I'm afraid something has happened."

Now she starts her trouble-machine at that point, and an old trouble-machine is like an old-fashioned loom. Did you ever seen an old woman at her loom? I can just remember having seen one, a good old woman sitting with both feet working the pedals and both

hands throwing the shuttle, and the spools in her mouth—hands and feet and mouth all going at once, just as hard as they could. And I have seen those trouble-machines start, hands, heart, soul, foot, spirit, body, everything at work together conjuring up troubles.

This good woman thinks, "I know something has happened." The minute hand points a minute over time and she says again, "I know now something has happened—and the fact of the business is, I had a presentiment the other day that that horse would run away and kill every child I have. The Lord knows I am not fit to be a mother. I am not worthy to have any children. I recollect now, the last time I drove old John, he took a fearful fright, and I said I would never let the children drive him again. The Lord knows I am the most careless creature and don't deserve anything more than to have every child dead. And I am satisfied they are, and that it is a judgment sent on me for my carelessness."

Well, about this time the husband walks in and sees the situation, and says, "Wife, what in the world is the matter with you?" She replies, "I gave the children permission to drive old John this afternoon, and they promised to be back at four o'clock and it is now four-thirty and they haven't come. And they promised me they would come, and you know, husband, the children never told me a story in their lives."

"Why, wife, they tell you stories every day."

"Well," she says "I had a presentiment that the children would be killed by that horse, a few days ago." Her husband laughingly says to her, "You are always having something, but I am sure those children will be here directly."

Soon she says to him, "I never told you about the horse getting so frightened with me the other

day, and I know my children are killed, and I want you to go and get them, dead or alive, and do it quickly, or I shall be crazy."

"Wife, I am not going to bother about the children, for they will be here shortly."

But she says, "If you don't go, I will go myself," and well he knows what that means, and off he starts. About the time he gets to the front gate, here comes old John, jogging along, in his camp-meeting trot, and stops right in front of the gate, and the children jump out of the carriage with a laugh of merriment, and mother looks on the picture a minute, and turns and goes back into the house and sits down and buries her face in her hands and says, "What a goose I've been!"—and I say so, too. That's exactly my judgment on the question, and of all the geese in the world, the featherless goose is the most ridiculous.

I saw this same woman at church one day; she did not hear one word of my sermon. All the time I was preaching she was looking out the window, and as soon as I finished the sermon and pronounced the benediction, she rushed out to her buggy and drove rapidly away. I learned afterwards she had left a little fire in the grate at home, and all the time she was in the church she imagined her house was afire and she was looking every minute to see the flames and the smoke. When the service was dismissed, she hurried home, expecting at every turn of the wheels to see the fire burst out, and she drove up to the house and unlocked the door and went in—and found a pile of dead ashes in the grate, and she looked at them and said, "What a fool, what a fool I have been!"

Women are not the only creatures in the world, I am sorry to say, who borrow trouble. Oh, me, how we men borrow trouble! There is many a man who

has rolled and tumbled in his bed, with a feverish brain all night, over some trouble he ought to have gone to sleep over at nine o'clock; then he could have waked up fresh the next morning and started to work out the problem.

A ship befogged, or a ship near the breakers, slows up and sounds the alarm and proceeds towards its destination—but she is as safe among the breakers and dense fogs as she is in the harbour until she strikes the breakers, or has a collision with another unlucky voyager. Why can't humanity slow up, like the grand old ship, use its common sense, be careful, be prudent, be thoughtful, find out where the breakers are, and keep off from them, know and realize, when enveloped in a fog, that bye and bye the fog will lift and the sun will shine out in all its grandeur and beauty?

Experience would tell us much if we would turn back over its pages. The fact that I have never starved is proof that I never will starve if I stick close to God. David said:

"I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Every good mother should close up shop along the line of a diseased and selfish imagination and live in the realm of sense and logic, and every father and husband should turn over his trouble-machine to some old bachelor who has nothing special to do but to run it; and if he should run it and himself, too, into the ground this world would not have gained or lost much thereby.

A cheerful, bright-faced travelling man, in conversation with me a few days ago said, "Mr. Jones, about two years ago I found myself a very morose and unhappy man, with a wife and six children. The

expenses of my family were growing, and my salary was not increasing. I thought of my children to educate, home comforts to procure, and so on, and so on, until I almost despaired of trying to work out the problems of life. My wife detected it growing on me on every visit I made home. One day when I had kissed her good-bye she followed me to the gate with a bright, happy smile, and said, "I want you to take this little book with you and make me a promise." Slipping a little blank book into my hand, she said, "Promise me you will make a record of every case you see while away on this trip of those worse off than you." I found seventeen cases the first day and more the next. The third day I laid my little book and my trouble-machine aside and I went back home a happy man, and I told my wife her prescription had worked like a charm, and now for nearly two years I have been a happy man."

Oh, that we might be able to settle these questions in the right way, that we might be able to do away with worry, that we might be able to meet the cares of life during the day with a brave, true heart, ever ready and willing to do our best, and then at night lie down in peaceful sleep, trusting God, who is always willing to help us with our burdens.

Did you know that a bed was made to sleep in and that God sent night to this world that we might sleep and rest for the next day's battle? Did you know that He has given us His precious promise that "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and again, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be"? And oh, how wickedly foolish a man is who tries to work out his troubles at night instead of sleeping, the man who forgets that God has promised to take care of us, and has promised that if you "seek first the kingdom of

God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added unto you."

How sorry I am for the man who says, "I know starvation is right at my door. I have made buckle and tongue meet up to this time, but they will never meet any more," and so he worries on and on a great deal like the old woman who prayed to God for twenty years for grace to die in the poorhouse. She had an elegant mansion and was worth thirty thousand dollars, and yet that was the burden of her prayer for twenty years. The Lord will never give a person grace to die in the poorhouse when he is going to die rich.

And again many of us are like the old woman who in borrowing trouble said, "I know I am going to starve to death; I have meat in the smokehouse for this year and hogs to kill next year, and pigs for the year after, but what in the world will I do after that?"

If a man is young and strong and vigorous, why does he need to trouble about the bread and meat question? And after all this is a very small question. As God is my judge, I was born poor and raised poor, and yet I have never worried about something to eat up to this hour—I never have, and I never want to. I never want to take any more trouble to bed with me than I can kick off. Oh, that we could all say with the poet:

"I ain't going to worry any more,
Ain't going to fuss and fret about it.
We'll get what's coming to us sho',
Or, thank God! we can get along without it."

The devil has a great big joke on a Christian when he keeps him awake half the night, and I imagine when the devil bids some Christians good-bye he will turn around and say, "He has gone to glory, but I

had enough fun out of him before he got there." I am not going to be joked in that way; I am not going to be kicked around in that way, for I have the promise of God's Word, "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." And as long as the lilies of the fields are clothed and the birds of the air are fed, I know God will take care of the man who trusts in Him.

I have often thought of the sound philosophy of a man who said, "In the hotel where I was staying one night, in the room above me, I heard a man walking the floor until the clock struck twelve, and one, and two o'clock. The man in the room with me wanted to go to sleep and could not on account of the man in the room above us. Finally he got up and dressed and went upstairs and knocked on the door, and said to the man, "Friend, what in the world is the matter? I can't sleep with you walking the floor above me." The man replied, "I owe ten thousand dollars and it is due to-morrow and I have done my best, and cannot pay it." "Do you mean to say you have done your best to pay this money?" The man answered, "Yes." "Well, my friend, if you have done the best you can, you go to bed, and let the other man do the walking." So with me, I have decided not to worry over the things I cannot help, but to let the other fellow do the walking.

Trouble! Borrowed trouble! Home-made trouble! And all this sort of trouble! I have often seen the time when I could have done a great deal of worrying, could have started a worrying-machine of my own and kept it running day and night. Among the hardest worked months of my ministry, while depending on God and doing my duty, there have been times in my home when things seemed mighty blue. On one

of my first circuits, where I was sent by the Conference which I had joined soon after my conversion, I had charge of nine churches, and also rented a one-horse crop of about twelve acres, ploughing it and hoeing it myself. I would plough and hoe until about sun-down in the afternoon, then feed my pony, eat my supper, do the night work, and go off somewhere and preach almost every night during the year. The gospel that I preached was a very close one, for I tried to be true to the Word of God, which is a "two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It seemed to me that the members of my churches had forsaken me. They had refused to pay me anything. We were moneyless and it seemed friendless, at that time. Some of the officers of the churches came to my wife, and told her unless I changed my way of preaching I would not receive anything for my work that year. I said to my wife, "I must be true to God at any cost." One day in the late spring, just after we had eaten dinner, my wife looked up at me, and said, "All that we have to eat in the world is on this table." I looked at her and said, "Well, wife, I believe I have been true to God. I have done my best. I have preached and worked and prayed and tried to do my whole duty to God and man, and we will stick it out right here, and if we starve to death, we will make believe we died with typhoid fever. But," I added, "I am mighty thankful you didn't tell me this was all we had to eat before I had finished my dinner, for I might not have enjoyed it if I had known the truth." That afternoon about sun-down I came in as usual, fed my pony, went to the woodpile, and began to cut up some stove wood. When I had finished cutting it, I said

to myself, "How foolish, cutting stove wood to cook with, and nothing to cook." Just about that time I looked up the road and saw one of my official members coming. He drove into my yard, and unloaded more provisions that I had ever had in my house before or since. And it wasn't long before such a revival broke out in that community as those people had never seen. I tell you, God is not going to let a faithful servant suffer for the things that he really needs.

Oh, that we might separate and classify our troubles! That we might eliminate the borrowed trouble, that we might be able to get rid of it. That good mother need not have gotten down on her knees and asked God to stop old John and keep him from running away and killing her children. The Lord is not going to stop old John when he is not even running away. You need not ask God to put out the fire when the house is not on fire. He is too busy to do that sort of thing. You need not ask God to keep you from starving to death when you have all you need to eat.

I wish we all had as much sense as the little girl who lost her breastpin. Her mother had taught her to go to God in prayer when she was in trouble. She looked for the pin, and when she could not find it she said, "Mamma, I will go to God, and ask Him to help me find it." She went to the side of the bed to kneel, as was her custom when she prayed, and when she knelt one of her knees rested on the pin. She looked up quickly and said, "Never mind, God, I've done found it." Oh, for the childish faith that trusts God to help bring the right to pass.

There is but one remedy for home-made troubles. And there is but one remedy for heart troubles. It is the good old-fashioned common sense and religion, mixed in equal parts.

But let us come to the real troubles. They have shape and form and being. There are real troubles in life that touch us all along the line. There are burdens that I cannot bear, and burdens that you cannot bear. There are burdens pressing upon millions of hearts upon this earth—burdens that if an angel were called upon to bear he would shudder at the great load. Oh, how many burdens press upon the hearts of mothers and upon the hearts of fathers and upon the hearts of children, and upon the hearts of men all over this land. And there is a point beyond which you cannot go with your load. I believe if it were not for the cross of Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, the Burden-Bearer, the great heart of this world would break. What are my real burdens and what are your real burdens?

There are the burdens of anxiety that press sorely upon men's hearts. A brother in the ministry preaching to a congregation at St. John's Church, ———, told how his godly father stood in the pulpit with his eyes fixed on him and preached earnestly, and in his exhortation said, watching the godless boy, "Come, come to-night. Accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour." The pressure of the burden on the father's heart was so great that he trembled for a moment, then fell prostrate in the pulpit and died. Oh, that boy saw the burden upon his father's heart, and the father carried it until he threw it down in death, and, thank God, he could not carry it beyond the grave.

I once visited the insane asylum of Georgia. I went through the different wards with the keeper, and as we walked through ward after ward, I could see here and there the distorted, mad face of a mother, once so pure and sweet; and as I looked at the glare of her eyes and the hideous expression of her face, the doctor would say to me, "This is the wife of a

prominent man, and the mother of a large family of children." And I said to myself, "Mother, what tore you away from your home? What robbed you of the care of your children? What took you from the side of your husband and shut you up in this dreary, desolate place?" And her very face spoke the answer back to me, "Trouble did this, trouble did this! Overburdened! Overburdened!" I go to the hotel, where lies a poor suicide, the pistol by his side, the self-inflicted wound in his temple covered with his own blood, and as I look at him I say, "O man, man! what did this?" And he speaks back in silent, unmistakable language, "Trouble did this. I had more than I could bear. Overburdened! Overloaded!"

Oh, how many hearts are burdened! This little incident I read sometime ago of a mother who was sitting in the company of a dozen other ladies, when the conversation turned on trouble. One lady related her trouble and another told hers, and another hers—many of them imaginary. When at last all of them had spoken except the pale-faced little woman, some one turned to her and said, "You have not told us your trouble." "Oh, ladies," she said, "I have been listening to your troubles and have thought them only bubbles on Life's current. But I have had trouble. I was raised in affluence and wealth and never knew a want. My husband was also wealthy. We married and united our fortunes and settled on our beautiful plantation on the banks of the Savannah River. We lived there happily and peacefully for a number of years, and God blessed us with four sweet children. One night I was awakened by my hand touching from the side of the bed a current of water. We found that the water was eighteen inches in the room. My husband rushed for the children, and saw that

they were all safe, then he took me, with the children, out of the house to a little knoll in the yard. We stood there only a moment and saw the water coming higher and higher—it was a water spout coming from above, causing a rapid rise in the river.

“My husband said, ‘Wife, I will take you and the babies to the hillside, where you will be safe.’ He carried us to the hillside, and as he came back through the valley one of those fearful waves came down and swept him out of sight. I have never seen my husband since. But that was not trouble.

“I stood there, under the pale light of the moon, and saw the turbid waters rise to my youngest child, engulf it, and sweep it out of my sight forever. Then I saw the water carry away the next, and the next child, and I have never seen my husband or one of the three children since that time. But that was not trouble.

“That left me with one precious baby in my arms, all that I had left, and I trained and nurtured that child until he was seventeen years old. Then I sent him, a pure, good boy, off to college.”

That is the epitome and the doom of thousands of boys; “I sent him off to college.” Would any one believe from that remark that I did not believe in colleges and education? Yes, sir, I believe in education as much as any man in this country, but I have said and I repeat it, I would rather my boy would be in heaven learning his A B C’s than to have him sit down in hell and read Greek forever. All unsanctified knowledge is degrading. Just let us get that thought, and that is my sentiment exactly along that line. Anyway, I reckon we will have little else to do when we get to heaven but learn forever, and I feel sure God will help me in heaven to learn the many lessons I should know.

But to go back to my story. "I sent my boy off to college and when he came home he was dissipated, unruly, and godless in all of his ways. But I did my best, and lavished every kindness and all the generosity of my wealth upon my boy, but he went from bad to worse, until at last I received an account in a newspaper of my boy being hung in a distant state for a terrible crime. And he died a felon's death, on a felon's gallows, and has gone to a felon's hell, and oh, this is trouble! this is trouble!"

The real troubles of life, how they press upon us. I used to think it strange that God had fixed it so the innocent should suffer with the guilty. I did not understand God's economy along this line. And one day speaking on this subject to a man in one of our large Southern cities, he said to me, "Mr. Jones, don't ever say again that you do not see why the innocent should suffer with the guilty." He said, "When I married, my wife was one of the sweetest, purest little Christian women I have ever known, and her confidence and love for me seemed to be supreme. She did not know at that time that I drank, and was dissipated in many ways. After a few months of married life, I began to drift back in the old ways. My wife clung to me, remonstrating with me, begging me to live a true, Christian life. While I loved her, I paid very little attention to her pleadings. One morning, after I had been out most of the night before, I walked down to the dining-room, where my wife was seated at the head of our breakfast table. She was in a position where I could see her face perfectly, without her realizing I was looking at her. I saw for the first time as I looked at her, that my life was making its inroads into her heart and life. I saw the pale face, with its blue veins standing out prominently on her forehead. I saw the look of suffering, and of

hopeless despair upon that face, and I said to myself, 'Old man, you may be having a mighty good time, but you are breaking the heart of the sweetest little wife God ever gave a man.' I took her in my arms and begged her to forgive me, and there we knelt and prayed and asked God to make me the husband I knew she deserved to have. And O Mr. Jones, how I thank God that the innocent do suffer with the guilty!"

In after years, how often the vision of a sweet, patient mother's face has brought a boy back to God and to right.

There is no measuring the sorrow one boy or one girl can bring upon a mother's heart. O boys and girls, every misstep of your life, your foot goes down on poor mother's heart. But thank God, no matter what our burdens are, they come as blessings. God means for us a lesson with each burden.

When our children are little they step on our toes, but when they grow up they tread on our hearts. My children may break my heart, but I'll stick to them to the very gates of hell. I love them while they are good; I love them while they are bad, and this old world may turn its back upon them, but their father will stick to them as long as God gives them life, and in heaven he will stand at the gates of pearl, awaiting the coming of each one of them.

Then, again, there are troubles of sorrow and grief, and the burdens of anxiety and the burdens of a thousand kinds that press upon us. Then the burden of guilt—oh, how it presses upon poor human nature! Here is a poor sinner, sick and heavy laden—look at him as he presents his case before the throne. Undone, wretched, borne down with the pressure of guilt enough to crush a world, and there he is with his burden of guilt. He comes with it to God. He comes

to Christ with his burden, and the great Burden-Bearer takes it off and says to him:

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.”

Oh, the burden of guilt. I have felt it a thousand times. I have felt it down in the depths of my soul that I am the most guilty wretch in all the universe. I have knelt in the sight of the cross, and how gloriously Christ would lift that burden from off my soul.

Bunyan represents his pilgrim as reaching the wicket gate and passing up to the cross, where the burden rolls off of him as he stands upright before God. And no man can stand upright before God, until his burden has rolled off from him.

Oh, how our burdens press us down! I have hung my head many a time when there was not a man near me, just from this consciousness of guilt.

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth.” The burden of guilt! Guilty before God! Guilty before man! Oh, the guilt that I carry in my bosom! The guilt you carry! How many of us can say, “Oh, the burden of my guilt!”

Then there is the burden of grief. Every mourning veil we see carries upon its very texture a history. Death came to my humble cottage home when I was not a Christian. It was the darkest hour of my life's history. God blessed us with a sweet little baby, who was at that time just nineteen months old. She was so playful and joyous and happy. My wife went down to visit a sister of mine in another state. The day she was to come home I had gone to town and bought some nice presents for the little child. I thought, “This evening I will take her in my arms and I will see her eyes dance and her little fingers catch at these things I have for her and I shall see

her little heart made glad." Wicked though I was, the highest aspiration of my heart was to make my child happy and glad. I walked into town after dinner that day, and was handed a telegram which was fraught with sadness and sorrow. "Little Beulah is very ill. Come immediately."

I started to go to them with a weight on my heart which almost crushed me. And on my way, as I would doze into disquieted sleep, two or three times I dreamed that I had that sweet, playful child in my arms, and I felt each time, upon waking, "I know she is better." The last part of the journey I had to go in a buggy, and as I drove up to the front gate of my sister's home, where my wife was stopping, she came to the door to meet me, and I shall never forget how she looked. I went into the room, and there was something so unusual to be seen. I walked up, with my wife clinging to my arm, and turned back the white cloth, and there was my little girl, looking like an angel chiselled out of marble. I put my hand on her face and it was so cold. I went into another room, and oh, how cheerless and how dark everything seemed!

I am so glad that I can say to you, God has in His keeping one of my children. I have committed her to Him forever, and I thank God I can say of the six children that God has given to bless our home that I am a much better father than they would have had if they had not had that sweet little sister in heaven. I am a better father to my children than I would have been had it not been for that precious one, and I am going to try to train, to nurture, and to keep my children in the right path, that they may meet this precious little one in heaven.

The burden of anxiety! The burden of grief! Where is the heart that has never been pressed down

in the pilgrimage to the grave? This is a world of burdens. I have seen wives and mothers literally crushed with the burden of anxiety.

I recollect a woman who came to the altar and prayed for such a long time. When the others had all gone away I said to her, "My sister, can't you trust it all to God?" She looked up at me and said, "Mr. Jones, I have been praying for my husband for weeks, and months, and years. And I have come to the altar to-night to stay until my husband gives his heart to God." I had met her husband, and it seemed to me that he was the coldest-blooded infidel I had ever seen. I said to her, "If I were you, my sister, I would go home and talk to my husband and pray there." She said, "No, I have done my best to pray and talk with him in my home, and I am going to stay right here until my husband gives his heart to God." I went and found her husband and said to him, "There are no weapons that were ever made in the United States, loaded and held in my face ready to be fired at me, that would keep me from going to my wife if she had such a burden on her heart as your wife has on hers. Go up there and kneel down and give your heart to God."

"Mr. Jones, I am not concerned about religion, and I don't want to be a hypocrite," he said. I said to him, "But how can you break your wife's heart in this way?" I went back to the woman at the altar and told her that her husband refused to come. She said "He has not come, but I will never get off my knees till my husband gives his heart to God." The first thing I knew he was right there with her, and after we had prayed with him, he got off his knees and tried to pull her up from the altar. She looked at him and said, "Have you surrendered your heart to God?" He said, "No." "Then," she said, "I will

never get off my knees until you surrender your heart to God." We knelt and prayed again and again with him, and he was gloriously converted. When they got up from the altar she said to him, "You have never deceived me in your life and I take you at your word and I believe God will do just what I have been asking Him to do." It looked to me as if that wife would have died on her knees there if God had not answered her prayers.

And oh, the burdens that you and I carry for those we love! How many fathers' hearts and mothers' hearts are burdened on account of some unsaved loved one!

And the question comes to us, what shall we do with these burdens? The part of the philosopher is to know what to do with our burdens. It is not wise to sit down and count them. It is not wise to see how crushing they are, but what can we do with them? The answer comes to us thus:

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee."

A beautiful Newfoundland dog is swimming in that lake at will. His master stands on the bank and calls to him and he will not come. He rebukes him and still he does not come. Then the master stoops and picks up a stick and pitches it near the dog. The dog swims to it and catches it in his mouth and swims to his master, and lays the burden at his feet. That was the way and the only way his master could get him to come to him. If we were only willing to cast our burdens on the Lord, willing to cast our cares upon Him, knowing that "He careth for us"! Many a time we have wandered off on the sea of sin and death, away from God, and He calls us and we will not come. He beckons to us, and still we will not come. He rebukes us, and we refuse to come. And

then God places a crushing burden on our hearts, and with the burden He says, "Bring this back and lay it at my feet, and I will heed thy cause and heal thy wounds."

Blessed be God! Every burden of life is to bring you back to God. It is a message of God to bring you to Him.

You see that frail vessel as she is pitching on the rolling ocean? What's the matter? She is overloaded. Now and again the waves sweep over her bulwarks and she is about to go down under her fearful weight, when the captain says to her crew, "We must all go to the bottom with the cargo." About that time the *Great Eastern*, one of the grandest vessels that ever ploughed the Atlantic Ocean, comes beside the frail vessel, and its captain walks up to the edge of her bulwarks and looks down upon the little vessel and her crew and says, "You are overloaded, but you cast your cargo upon me. I will carry it for you in this grand old ship, and you can make port in safety." And the crew go to work with block and tackle and lift out their cargo, and lighten the little ship, so that it can go on its way rejoicing, and yet this added burden does not sink the *Great Eastern* one-hundredth part of an inch. She scarcely knows that she has taken on any other burden.

And here we are, our frail human vessels overloaded and we are about to go down with everything we have and are; and just at this time the grand old Ship of Zion ploughs its way up to our side, and the good captain, who is Jesus Christ, looks down at our frail, sinking ship, and says, "Cast your burdens upon me and I will carry them for you. They will not sink me one-hundredth part of an inch, and in that way you can make port in safety." And we cast our burdens on Him, and we go on our way, saying, "Thank God!

The burden has been taken from us. Our little boats strike a bee-line for the shores of everlasting deliverance.

One of the most touching scenes in my ministry is when some little girl comes up to me and says, "Mr. Jones, please pray for my papa. He is so wicked and he will not come to church." And another little girl comes to me and says, "The Lord has blessed me, Mr. Jones, but I am so anxious about my papa."

O brother, brother, let's unload, with God's help, the burden on wife and children's hearts. I owe my wife a debt I could never pay until I paid it at the cross of Jesus Christ. My wife unloaded this burden at the foot of the cross, and since that time, how glorious and joyous her life has been! Oh, that you would meet your wife at the cross. Young men, meet your mother at this cross. O boys, look at mother's grey hairs; look at the wrinkles in her face, and say to yourselves, "Did I make one of those lines of care in my mother's precious face? Am I the cause of one of those grey hairs?"

On the train a few days ago I met a commercial man whom I had known some time, and during the conversation he said to me, "Mr. Jones, I was very much touched the other day; I got a letter from my mother, and it was such a good, sweet letter. It was not what she wrote nor what she said, but it was the tremulous hand on the paper, and I realized as never before that my precious old mother was nearly through writing to her boy. That letter showed me, as nothing had ever done before, my indifference and neglect to my mother, and I thank God that I have made up my mind to be a joy to my mother the balance of her life."

Boys! let's think about mother before it is too late.

Husband, let's think about wife. Neighbour, let's think about neighbour, and let's go to work and unload every burden that we have ever put on any one's heart or life. Let's bring peace and joy into those homes of ours that have been so desolate. I want to make home happy, for I know I had the darkest, most desolate one a wife ever lived in, until God saved me from my sin.

David had been there and he knew what he was talking about. Let us listen to him:

"Give ear to my cry, O God, and hide not thyself from my supplications.

"Attend unto me and hear me. I mourn in my complaint and make a noise.

"Because of the voice of the enemy, and because of the oppression of the wicked.

"O that I had the wings of a dove that I might fly away and be at rest."

How often I have felt that I would like to fly away to some peaceful mountain and have one week's rest, free from the cares and sorrows of life. Then, I could come back to this world, a new man. But thank God, I have learned to cast my burden upon the Lord, knowing that He would sustain me.

Just think of it! Is there trouble in your home? Is there sorrow in your life? Then take all to Jesus, and lay your burdens at His feet. Oh, how sweet to know that He says to us:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

And, thank God, it won't be much longer till the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. And when I think, when worn and tired, of that word "rest," where there will be no pain, nor trouble, nor tears, how sweet it is to me. Sitting in

the family room with mother, directly comes little six-year-old Annie, crying as if her heart would break, and with tears rolling down her face, and her mother says, "What is it, darling? Don't cry." And she says, "Mamma, I can't help it." And while the tears are rolling down her face, Mamma takes the little girl in her arms and says, "Don't cry," and with her motherly hand she wipes away her tears and they are gone from the little child's eyes. Oh, the touch of that mother's hands on that sweet little child.

It was during the Civil War, the cruel war between the states, and it was a cruel war. A mother was sent for to come to the front, to the battlefields of Virginia, where her son lay mortally wounded. She hurried to the place, and found that her son was in the home of a kind woman who lived out near the edge of town. When the mother got to where her son was staying, she found the doctors in consultation over his case. She said to them, "O doctors, let me go at once to my precious child." The doctors said to her, "We cannot let you see him. The tide of life is swiftly flowing out, and the least excitement would prove fatal." The mother stayed all day just outside the room where her son was lying. She could hear his moans and cries of pain. As the nurse went to and from the room the mother watched her with eager eyes. After sitting near the room all day, and far into the night, the nurse left the room, and while the boy was alone, he became very restless and his cries became very frequent. Finally the mother, unable to bear it any longer, slipped up to the side of her boy's bed and laid her hand gently on his forehead and began to stroke it gently. All the nervous twitching ceased from his face and body, and his cries were stilled. After lying perfectly quiet for several moments, he whispered, "So like my mother's hand.

So like my mother's hand," and dropped off into a peaceful, quiet sleep.

And I have thought that as we pass the gates of everlasting deliverance, the blessed Christ will stroke His gentle hand over our eyes that have been drowned in tears a thousand times; then, thank God, our tears will be gone forever. No tears! No sadness! No sickness! No pain forevermore!

IX

OF ROYAL BIRTH

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."—I JOHN iii: 9.

I TAKE up this line of thought because I am very much troubled about the Christians of this country, more, perhaps, than for the sinners at this present time. The sinners are more easily impressed, more easily moved, than a great many so-called Christians. If God Almighty will move up the front ranks, I will go security for the rear ranks, that they will move up too. But how can the rear ranks move up, when they stand with their toes against the heels of the Christians?

I say to the Christians, "Step aside, or move up." There's many an old, broken-down car and engine on the main line to the good world! Lord, put them into running order and start them up, or sidetrack the last one of them! When a Christian gets so he cannot run the race set before him, the best thing he can do, is to sidetrack for repairs, and not to stop the traffic on the main line to heaven while mending his old box-car.

Oh, may the God of truth bless the professing Christians in this country, and may He lift us up to a plane where we can show humanity what real Christianity is.

This verse that we select for a text gave me more

pain and trouble, for the first seven or eight years of my religious life, than perhaps all other passages of God's word. This text, to me, was once a two-edged sword, and I never approached it that I didn't feel its sharp blades cutting asunder and dividing the very joints and marrow of my soul and spirit.

To a great many the reading of this text is nothing more than the applying of sound, but to others, and to me, while this text was once a two-edged sword, now it is the sweetest bread heaven could give me. I don't propose to preach on sanctification, I don't intend to touch any controversial point, or controverted dogmas and views. I am going to preach on old-fashioned righteousness, and the life of the really converted man. I am going to preach on everyday religion, the kind I ought to live, the kind you ought to live, the kind we must live if we are to reach that goal to which we are tending. I shall not get up as high as sanctification, though I believe that "without holiness, no man shall see God." If you ask me why I believe that I tell you it is because God says so in His precious word, and I don't need any better reason for my belief than that.

Now, this text is a tremendous climax, and we must go up to it by degrees. We cannot sit on the ground and jump up to the top of this great point with one bound. But we have got to go up gradually, and the context furnishes the ladder by which we may climb and get up on a plane where we cannot sin because we are born of God.

The first round of the ladder to climb, and it has only three, is this:

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. . . .

“Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

There is my highest conception of heaven, there is the picture I love to look at and admire. Some people like to look at the towering spires and the jasper walls and pearly gates and golden streets, but here is my idea of heaven, “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

I have a hundred reasons why I had rather live ten years longer than die to-morrow, but the biggest reason is this, I am not enough like Christ. Before I die I want to be like Him in every respect. There are a great many things I want to eliminate, a great many more I want to take on, that I may be more like Him before I see Him in His beauty.

The first announcement of the text is the princely character of the Christian man, “Now are we sons of God.” What a blessed realization this is to poor, weak humanity. Thank God, the sentiment of the song is but the truth of God’s word, “I’m the child of a king.” Every Christian must realize, first, “I am the son of the Lord God Almighty. He is my Father, I am His child.” It is worth a great deal to know and be conscious of the fact that one belongs to a noble family, to know that the blood, which courses through his veins, is as pure and good as ever flowed through human veins.

I am so glad that God’s precious book gives us, through all of its pages, the lineage of Jesus Christ, which is pure and noble. It is worth a great deal to a man to know that his father was a princely man, to know that his mother was one of the purest women

that ever lived. Many a boy has drifted to the very verge of destruction and despair in his waywardness and dissipation, and in some thoughtful moment, a kind friend has approached him and laid his hand on his shoulder and said, "My young friend, why will you dissipate and go so far in sin? Your mother was one of the noblest women I ever knew. Your father was a princely Christian character," and that boy has walked off and buried his face in his hands, and wept like a child, as he said, "I know my mother was the best woman in the world, and I know my father was the best man, and to-day I will reform my life, and serve my mother's God, and follow my father's Christ." No man ever gets away from the influence of a noble father.

I once knew a man in Mississippi, an elegant gentleman, fifty years old. He was called an agnostic, or infidel. After the meeting which I was holding in the town where he lived, had progressed several days, he stood up one morning in the vast congregation and said, "My fellow-citizens, I have roamed all over the range of science and literature, and I have never found rest to my soul. To-day my mind turns back to the purest, sweetest mother a boy ever had. My mind goes back to my precious father, and to the family altar and to the sacred life in the home, and I stand up to-day to confess my sins and give my life to Christ."

Ah, me! if we realize who we are, how much that will help us to be what we ought to be.

When Prince Edward came to this country some years ago, his coming was heralded by cable, and announced in the press of America. And when he stepped out on American soil, he was greeted by a delegation of American citizens, who said to him, "All honour to you, Prince Edward, heir-apparent to

the crown of England. We give you a hearty welcome to our country." And they added, in substance, "Prince Edward, we expect something of you. You are the son of Queen Victoria, the greatest queen that sits upon a throne in this world, and as her son, you are a princely character. While in our country, we want you to talk like a prince, behave yourself like a prince, give like a prince, go where a prince ought to go, and stay away from where a prince ought not to go." And everywhere he went it was announced in the papers, and every word he said was copied in the press, and when he bowed himself out of America and started home to his native land, our whole country said, "There's the worthy son of a worthy mother."

I am not the son of Queen Victoria, nor an heir-apparent to the crown of England, but I am the son of the Lord God Almighty, and joint heir with Christ to all heavenly things. If I am, I ought to behave myself like a prince. I ought to do like a prince, and act like a prince and pay like a prince. I ought to go where a prince ought to go, and stay away from the places where a prince ought not to go. If I am a princely character, I will maintain the dignity and the character of the family to which I belong. By dignity, I do not mean false dignity. I mean truthfulness, and uprightness, and integrity, and honour.

One of the crowned heads of an Eastern country put his boy in charge of a tutor to be trained and educated. The boy was a rude, mischievous boy, and the question with the tutor was how to govern him. He couldn't use the rod on the king's son, and after studying over the problem, he decided on this plan. He made a bow of ribbon and pinned it on the lapel of the boy's coat, and the boy looked at it and said,

"What is that?" The teacher said, "That is the signet of your royalty; that's emblematic of your princely character. That's the sign that you are the son of a king." And ever after that, when the boy misbehaved, the tutor would point his finger at the badge, and the boy would subside in a moment.

St. Paul said, "I carry about with me the marks of Jesus Christ, and when the divine finger drops on these marks, I subside, for I recollect who I am, what I am."

"I'm the child of a king." One of the purest men who ever lived, a Bishop in the Methodist Church, who died some time ago, in one of his sermons said, "Shortly after I joined the church, I was riding through the country, when this thought impressed me, 'I am now a member of the church of Christ, and I have it in my power to bring reproach and shame upon the name and cause of Christ,' and when that thought possessed me, it overwhelmed me." Oh, what a fearful power delegated to mortal man! Power to bring reproach and shame upon the name and cause of Jesus Christ! The prayer I lift up from my heart is, "God help me to die rather than bring a stain upon the family of God, and the name of Jesus Christ."

The story goes that when Christ was among men, that one day, as He was talking to His disciples about leaving them, one of them said to Him, "When you leave us and go from this earth forever, who will you leave in charge of this great work? Who will represent you in our Father's work?" Jesus turned lovingly to His disciples and said, "I have no one to leave but my followers, my disciples; with you rests the keeping of the honour of our Father." "And if we should fail to hold up the standard?" said His disciple. "Then all would fail, my brother, and our

Father's house, and our Father's work, and our Father's name would be dishonoured."

When you walk out before the world with the announcement, "I'm the child of a king, I'm the heir-apparent to all things," the world doffs its hat and says, "We expect you to live like an heir-apparent." I am so glad the world won't compromise with Christian people down to the point where it would willingly let them do what they like. I am glad that no wicked man ever sees a professing Christian doing wrong, that he doesn't point his finger of scorn at him and say, "Just look at that professing Christian; he dishonours his God and disgraces himself." I am glad the world thinks more of Christ, and more of Christianity, than to let Christian people misrepresent the gospel of Christ, without throwing it in our teeth and telling us to our faces, "We believe you are hypocrites."

And then, after professing like this, it behooves us to be grateful for the redeeming mercy and condescending grace that would adopt us into a heavenly family. It behooves us to lead a pure life, and to have a stainless character before God and men.

"Now are we sons of God." It isn't "bye and bye." It isn't when I am bidding friends on earth good-bye, and pluming myself for flight to glory and God, but it is down in this world of temptation and trial. Every morning, noon, and night I may fall upon my knees and say, "My Father, who art in heaven." I can explain my existence on no other hypothesis than that God is my Father.

I was getting on a train some months ago, when a gentleman of my acquaintance boarded the train about the same time. After shaking hands and talking with him a moment, I said, "What is the news?" He said, "Nothing special, I believe, except that I came

near being killed last night." When I asked him how, he said, "The agent at the depot in our town was lying on the platform, drunk. He has been drunk for several days. I went up to help him into the depot, and when I caught hold of him, he jerked out his pistol, and shot at me twice, and came very near hitting me." I said to him, "Do you mean to tell me that the agent at the depot in your town has been drunk for several days? I thought the officers on this road were very strict with their employees. How is it that this man maintains his position, if he drinks in that way?" The gentleman answered me, "I can't tell you, only this man, this agent, is the brother-in-law of the president of the road." When he said that, I saw it in a moment, and then I said to myself, "How is it that God puts up with me as He does? How is it that God has borne with me through so many weaknesses and sins?" And I found the answer in this, not because God is my brother-in-law, but because God is my Father, and isn't it astonishing how God will bear with His children?

I learned a great lesson of my relation to God in a little incident that happened in my home life. We had in our employ a servant girl nursing my little Laura, the baby in our home. She was rather a careless, indifferent servant. I was sitting in the room one morning, just after breakfast, when the girl walked in, and my wife said to her, "Alice, you may go home this morning, and tell your mother to come for your wages. Tell her I do not need you any longer. You may go." After a few minutes, hearing no sound, I looked up from the book I was reading, and there the girl stood, her face turned full toward my wife, and the tears running down her cheeks. In a moment she said, "Miss Laura, please don't turn me off. I know I am the poorest servant you ever

had, but I don't want to be turned off; please, ma'am, keep me; please, ma'am, give me another trial," and I turned and said to my wife, "Don't turn her off; don't dismiss her; give her the trial she pleads so for." And then, I thought to myself, "If the Lord Jesus Christ were to come down this morning and discharge me and say to me, 'I don't want you any longer,' I would fall down on my knees and say, 'O precious Saviour, though I know I am the poorest servant you ever had, don't turn me off.'" Oh, how I beg the blessed Christ to keep me in His life's employ. O blessed Christ! So good to us, so merciful!

"When all thy mercies, O my Lord,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported by the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

"O, for such love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues,
Their Saviour's praises speak."

"Herein is love, not that we love him, but that he loved us and gave his Son to die for us" that every child of Adam might be adopted into the heavenly family, and become an heir to immortal life. I beg you to look up to-day, and see your Father's face, as it shines in beauty, and love, and mercy, and say, "Abba, Father, my Lord and my God." And then realizing your princely character, ever after this,

"Let your life and lips express
The holy gospel you profess."

"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." First, the princely character of the Christian, and now, the purity of that character. There is a great deal said about purity

of life and purity of heart in the book of God. The Christian is pure in his life, pure in his thoughts, and pure in his character.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

O guiltless man! guiltless woman! guiltless husband! guiltless wife! guiltless child! A purity like the character of the little ermine, that beautiful, fastidious little animal, with its hair and skin like the driven snow. The only way to capture it is to mark its course from its home, and then sprinkle mud and dirt along its pathway. When the little ermine reaches the muddy water and dirt, it will lie down and subject itself to capture and death before it will besmirch and soil one of those beautiful white hairs. And so the true Christian has reached his highest aim when he reaches the point where he will lie down and subject himself to torture and death before he will besmirch his character as a Christian. That is the Christian character. Princely in nature, and pure and upright in purpose.

Sooner or later we must meet this point, that God's people are a peculiar people, and God's people are a pure people. Sooner or later we must meet this in our convictions, and in our intelligent thought, and I say to you, there is no theological book in any library in this country, Protestant in its character, that puts salvation this side of these three principles. "Salvation," says all Protestant theology, "is the deliverance from sin, deliverance from the love of sin, and deliverance from the dominion of sin." I am not only pardoned for what I have done, but I am delivered from the love of the wrong, delivered, thank God! from the dominion of the wrong. I would dishonour

the religion of Jesus Christ if I professed to be a Christian, and at the same time professed to love the things that lead men astray. I am ready to say some things that may startle you at the first announcement, but right in there are the richest nuggets of gold that any man can possibly find this side of eternity. Haven't you heard men say, "I am obliged to sin"? Let's look at that fact a minute or two. If you are a sinner, in what do you sin? Which sin is it that you have got to commit before you go to bed at night? Will you pick it out for me? Will you go home to-night, and sit down and write out all the sins that God's grace cannot save you from, and then get down on your knees and ask the Lord to save you from all the sins except those on the list, and say, "I know, O Lord, you can't save me from these, but save me from all the rest"? Would you do that?

Down in my state, some time ago, a preacher got up in the pulpit and said a man cannot live without sin. If I had been there, I would have said to him, "Old fellow, you take that back, or print me a list of the sins a man has got to commit, and yet can go to heaven." If a man's sins be justified by Christ, we ourselves are not sinners. Christ a minister of sin? God forbid! Christ, with all the omnipotence of the second Person of the Trinity, God with all the power and omnipotence of the Father, can never save a man in heaven, until the blood of Christ, the means of grace, has saved him from sin. For one sin, God said, "Ye are damned forever."

Holiness! When you get holiness, you can enter, and without it no man shall see God. I am sick and tired of this dilly-dallying with the truth, and professing Christians standing up and saying, "I can't quit sinning." A man can quit sinning without religion at all. What is the hardest sin to quit? You say,

drinking whiskey. Well, I tell you a man can quit drinking whiskey without any religion at all. See that old, red-nosed fellow who has not been sober for ten years. You just let him see you put an ounce of arsenic in every gallon of liquor in the world and he is done. "I am done, gentlemen, I'll never drink another drop." It doesn't take religion to make him quit that. But a man wants a higher motive than that. You don't need religion to make you quit sinning. The fact of the business is, no man ever got religion until he quit sinning.

That sister says, "I am obliged to sin. I can't help it to save my life." Well, just for the sake of argument—we won't say it is so, but just suppose the case. Suppose your sin is tattling, and when you get up to-morrow morning, and the housework is arranged, you say to the children, "You keep house for mamma a few minutes, because mamma is obliged to sin, and her sin is tattling, and she must run next door and tattle a little; if she don't, she will die."

Brother, brother Christian, you who say you can't keep from sinning, let's suppose your sin is over-reaching in a trade. To-morrow morning, after you get your breakfast, and kiss your wife and children good-bye, say, "Wife, I don't know whether I can get back at noon to-day; you know I am a great sinner, I am obliged to sin, and my sin is cheating, and I am obliged to cheat somebody to-day before sundown, and I can't come back home till I do." Now, what are we going to do with cases like these? Don't you men and women know, if you were to talk that way, your families would put you in the asylum? And yet hundreds of so-called Christians are practically acting this way every day of their lives.

I am ready to take up this point and defy earth and hell equally upon it. Jesus is able to do for me

and for you all that we need to have done, and if that is true, then God knows I need to be delivered from sin, from the dominion of sin, from the love of sin, and the guilt of sin. I have got to reach that point in Christian life that was reached by Bunyan's Pilgrim, when he walked up to the cross, and the burden rolled from his conscience and he stood upright before God.

But that is not sufficient; the mere pardoning power that will leave me as I was, does not amount to much. I not only want to be pardoned for my past sins, but I want to be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

“A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of life divine.
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine.”

If I had but one prayer between this and eternity, I would pour out my soul in this one petition, “O Lord, give me a pure heart and a pure life.”

I do not consider any man safe until he is delivered from the love of those things which are wrong. There is no attitude toward God that is acceptable to Him, except the attitude that turns with loathing from sin. Let me illustrate what I mean. Here is a mother, sitting quietly in her room. Her only child, little Willie, just four years old, the pride of her life, sees his mother's pearl-handled knife lying on the table. The knife was a present from a friend and the mother values it highly. Little Willie, unknown to mother, picks up the knife, and runs out of the room, and in an hour mother wonders where he is. Directly the nurse comes in hurriedly and says, “Little Willie is lying out in the backyard covered with blood.” The mother rushes out there, and little Willie is gasping and breathing his last. In running with the knife

open, he tripped and fell, and the blade of the knife pierced the jugular vein. The mother grabs the bloody little angel in her arms and runs into the room, and just as she lays him on the bed, he breathes his last. She kisses him, and says, "O my sweet child, speak to me one more time!"

The next day mother carries little Willie to the grave and buries him, and comes back to her home, with a broken heart. As she sits down, and turns back the veil from her face, the nurse comes in and says to her, "Here's the little knife that Willie had, your little pearl-handled knife." The mother looks at the knife, the blade covered with the blood of her sweet little child, and she shrinks back in horror and says, "Take that knife out of my presence; I never want to see it again. It has the blood of my precious child on it."

When a Christian man or woman, under the light of God's holy spirit, can see that every sin in all the moral universe has been covered with the blood of the Son of God, he shrinks back from them in horror and says, "O let me get out of the presence of sin. It is covered with the precious blood of my bleeding Saviour." O brother, you will never know what purity is, until you see all impurity bathed in the blood of the Son of God. Let us hate and abhor and turn away from it, despising it utterly.

"He that is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

We have had, first, the princely character of the Christian; second, the purity of his Christian character, and now we come to the climax of the text, the imperviousness of the Christian character to sin. Now, if I were to say right here that an honest man cannot steal, everybody would say that is true. If I were to

say a sober man cannot get drunk, every one would say that is a fact. If I were to say a chaste man cannot be vulgar, they would say that is true. Well, now, if a truthful man, as a truthful man, cannot tell a lie, and an honest man, as an honest man, cannot steal, and a sober man, as a sober man, cannot get drunk; if logic is worth anything, and if common sense and religion will mix up at all, then I say, is there anything unreasonable in the proposition that, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin"? Don't common sense and logic and Christianity agree at all? Must we put logic over here, and common sense over there? Won't they mix? Yes, glory to God! they make the grandest compound in the world!

I once heard a man pray for common sense, and I said, "Amen." He prayed for more common sense, and I said, "Amen" again. That is what we want, more common sense in our religion. An honest man cannot steal, a truthful man cannot tell a lie, a sober man cannot get drunk. He may do all those things, but when he does them, he is no longer honest, truthful, or sober. And a Christian man can sin, but he is no longer a Christian when he does so.

"He that is born of God, doth not commit sin; because his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin."

There is the gist of the whole matter. There is the pivotal point in the whole text. "His seed remaineth in him." It is a moral "doth not," not a physical "doth not." Suppose some man had said to me this morning when I got up, "One of our preachers came here last night and stole your watch and clothes and ran away." I would look him in the face, and say, "My preacher brother could not steal my watch and clothes." I do not mean that he could not walk out on the street and into my room and carry off these

things, but it is against his principle, against his interests, against his convictions, against his desires and purposes, and I just know he did not do it. He is a man with the love and respect of every one in the city, with no reason at all for stealing anything away from me, and I know he couldn't have done it; and if every man in this country was like him, we would quit shutting our doors at night, and throw away our keys, and close up our sheriff's institution and every jail in this country. It's like the train—when we see it thundering along the track toward Kansas City, we know it isn't going to St. Louis, because all of its momentum is headed the other way, and when you get a man's purposes, desires, intentions, and inclinations set heavenward, with all the power God can give him, then he can't go to hell.

I tell you what a man has got to do in this world: it is to get where the Lord can bank on him and trust him. A banker once told me, as one of his clerks walked out of the door, "Mr. Jones, there is a boy who never told me a lie. He has never been unfaithful to this bank. I have never told him to do a thing that he didn't do it. I would trust him with every dollar in this bank." Now, brother, let's get where God can bank on us and trust us. That is what we want in the best and highest sense.

"His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin."

I came up the Coosa River to Rome, Georgia, and right where the Oostanala and the Etowah form the Coosa, there is the finest piece of bottom land I ever looked at. It seems to me it is the most fertile piece of land in our state. I drove along the road, on the bank of the river, and looked at the beautiful growth, large and stately hickory and walnut trees, growing so close together that they were standing within five or six feet of each other, with branches and limbs

interlocked and intertwined, so that they shut out every ray of the sun, and the high waters of the river had swept over the surface and had not left even a leaf or a sprig of grass. I looked at the ground, and said to myself, "This ground is preoccupied. Nothing else will grow there. You may sow wheat in there, but it won't come up. You may sow grass, but it will never sprout. The ground is preoccupied, and nothing else will grow there."

There are sowed in the true Christian's heart the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, and they grow up in the heart luxuriantly and interlock bough and limb and shut out every influence the devil can sow there. He may sow all the seed he wants to, but it won't even sprout. The ground is preoccupied, and nothing else will grow there.

What do I mean by that? I mean this. A friend could come to me and say, "Will you go to the theatre with me to-night?" and I would say, "No, this is the night we study our Sunday-school lesson." "Well, can you go to-morrow night?" "No, that's prayer-meeting night." "Well, how about the next night?" "Well, that's the night I visit the sick." "Well, when can you go?" "I don't know a night in the next thousand years that I can spare you. Every minute of my natural life is devoted to God, and I haven't a minute to give to the devil." There's preoccupation.

Lord, give us the sort of religion that is so busy working for Thee that we haven't a moment of time to give to the devil. Oh, that we might put ourselves where God could bank on us, could trust us.

You say, are there any men who live so that God can depend on them? I point you to His holy Word. There was a day when Satan was walking to and fro upon the earth, and the Lord said to him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job? There is none like

him in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil."

Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not hedged about him and about his house and about all that he hath, on every side? Hast thou not blessed the works of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land? Put forth thine hand now and touch all he hath and he will curse thee to thy face."

The Lord said unto Satan, "Behold all that he hath is in thy power, only put not thy hand upon him." In just a little while, word came that the enemy had fallen upon his sheep and his oxen, and that they were destroyed, and that his servants were consumed, and then that all his children had been destroyed.

"Then Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved his head, and fell upon the ground and worshipped, and said, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

"In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

And God said again to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil, and still he holdeth fast to integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause?"

And Satan answered the Lord and said, "Yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life, but put forth thy hand now, and touch his bones and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face."

And the Lord said unto Satan, "Behold he is in thy hand, but save his life."

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord,

and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And Job took a potsherd and scraped himself withal, and sat down among the ashes.

Then said his wife to him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." (And, O my brother, the devil plays a trump card when he gets a man's wife on his side.)

But Job said to her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

And in all this, did not Job *sin with his lips*. I imagine the devil stood aghast and said, "Wonder of wonders! Look at that! His last dollar gone, his children gone, his health gone, his wife turned against him, and there he is as loyal to God as ever."

And then he went out through the community and hunted up Job's friends, and they pitched in on Job's character and told lies about him and defamed him, but Job listened to them and stood up and said, "I have maintained mine integrity, I have not sinned against God." Then God walked in on the scene and said, "It is enough." And taking Job by the arm, He said, "Come and walk with me." And God gave Job twice as much as he had before, so the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than He did his beginning.

And God said to the devil, "I knew Job, I knew that I could bank on him, that I could trust him."

O Father in heaven, give us such a Christianity in this country, give us men and women that God can bank on.

X

“WHOSOEVER WILL”

“The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”—
REVELATION xxii: 17.

I GET the text from the last page of God's Holy Word. This is God's last message to man. And for fear that something might be added to, or that something might be taken from the Scripture, God adds this fearful admonition,

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

“And if any man shall take away from the words of this book of prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

I am so glad that God finishes up His Revelation to man with this gracious and universal invitation:

“And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

If I had been corresponding with a friend on any given subject, and he had written me a dozen or more letters upon that subject, if I wanted to find out his mind now concerning the matter, I would turn to his

last letter, the one bearing the most recent date. And if I would know God's will now concerning the race of man, I do not go back over Genesis, or Deuteronomy, or the prophecies of Isaiah, or the Epistles to the Romans by St. Paul. When I want to find out what are the concluding words of God's message to man, I turn through the books of the Bible until I come to God's last message.

It was a grand day in the world's history when the evening and the morning were the seventh day, when the Son of God and angels shouted over a finished world.

It was a grand day in the world's history when Adam and Eve, the first man and first woman, made in God's own image, stood before Him, with their reason clear and perfectly unruffled by passion, unclouded by prejudice, and unimpaired by disease. It was a grand conception to them as they looked over a finished world and saw the mountains, God's thoughts piled up; the valleys, God's thoughts spread out; the rivers, God's thoughts in motion; the oceans, God's thoughts imbedded; the dewdrops, God's thoughts in pearl as they mingled in loving tenderness and joined together on the leaf of the rose; the flowers, God's thoughts in bloom. And wherever man looked about him, all Nature in its beauty and freshness whispered back, "The hand that made me is divine."

It was a grand day in the world's history when it was announced through the moral universe of God that man had violated the law of God, and had brought misery and woe upon himself, and upon his progeny forever.

It was a grand day in the world's history when God met the fallen and degenerate pair and said to Eve, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

It was a grand day in the world's history when the last strong swimmer sank beneath the flood of waters, and left Noah in his ark, with his wife, his sons, their wives, and all kinds of the beasts of the field, to perpetuate the races of men and animals on the face of the earth.

It was a grand day in the world's history when Pharaoh and his hosts of chariots and men were swallowed up and engulfed in the Red Sea.

It was a grand day in the world's history when a burning hail fell on Sodom and Gomorrah and upon all the plains thereof, and destroyed the cities of the plains.

It was a grand day in the world's history when on Korah and Dathan and Abiram and their wicked company, the earth opened and swallowed them from out of the sight of men.

It was a grand day in the world's history when one hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers, under the blast of an archangel's wings, were wrapped in their winding sheets.

It was a grand day in the world's history when the old prophet of God stood on the hills of Judea with his torch in his hand, and with its beneficent rays shining down through seven centuries his voice was heard saying, "Simeon and Anna, prepare the cradle to rock the Babe of Bethlehem."

It was a grand day in the world's history when the Star poised itself over the manger of Bethlehem, and when the Wise Men gathered around the Babe of Bethlehem. There they looked upon an everlasting God lying asleep in Mary's arms. The king of angels, and God over all, blessed forevermore, was carried about in a Virgin's arms, the Saviour of the world, the divine Son of God.

It was a grand day in the world's history when, at

twelve years of age, this God-Man astonished all the wisdom of Jerusalem by His forethought and by His intelligence.

It was a grand day in the world's history when the Son of God notified His disciples to whom He had been sent by the Father, “I put you on notice that I must be crucified and shall lie in the tomb and the third day I will rise again.”

It was a grand day in the world's history when the Son of God hung suspended between two thieves, and cried out in a loud voice, “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?”

It was a grand day in the world's history when they buried this sacrifice in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and put the Roman seal upon it, and put sturdy Roman soldiers around to guard it.

It was a grand day in the world's history when on the morning of the third day, God summoned an angel to His side, for Christ Himself had announced the fact, “I am the sacrifice, and I go to die for the redemption of man.” And the only question with His disciples and all humanity was, “Will God accept the sacrifice?” It was the morning of the third day when God summoned an angel to His side and told him to go to earth as swift as the morning light and roll away the stone from the grave; and he made his appearance at the grave and rolled away the stone, and the Son of Man stood up in the sepulchre and took the napkin from his jaws, and the graveclothes from His body, and folded them and laid them to one side, and walked forth from the tomb, the firstfruits of the Resurrection. Then God accepted the sacrifice, and grasped the stylus in His own hand and signed the Magna Charta of man's salvation, and ever since that God-blessed moment it has been written, “Who-soever liveth and believeth on Him, shall not die.”

It was a grand day in the world's history when the Saviour of men stood surrounded by a company of five hundred, when the chariot descended from the skies and He stepped into the chariot and, above stars and moon, He disappeared and swept right up to the throne of God. And as they stood gazing up into the heavens, an angel flew back to earth and said,

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven."

It was a grand day in the world's history when the one hundred and twenty gathered in that upper chamber in Jerusalem. They prayed the first, the second, the third, and on into the tenth day, and as they were praying, they were asking for the imbue-ment of power from on high.

" They were gathered in an upper chamber,
They were all of one accord,
When the Holy Ghost descended,
Which was promised by our Lord."

Christ had told them, "Tarry here at Jerusalem until you are imbued with power from on high."

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

I have often thought of that expression, "It is expedient." "The best thing I can do for you is to leave you and go to my Father, and then his holy Spirit will come unto you."

"Master, can there be anything better than thy presence? Thou art the Bread of Life. Thou art the Water of Life to us. Thou art the Door, by which, if any man enter, he shall go in and eat and

hunger no more. Thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father, but by thee. Master, is it expedient, is it best that thou goest away?" He said, "It is expedient that I go to the Father."

And on the morning of the tenth day, as that company gathered and prayed in the upper chamber, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the adorable Trinity, flew right through the wounded side of the Son of God, and laved His wings in that precious blood, and flew down to earth, and rushed in upon that company, and filled the room like a mighty, rushing wind. And Peter opened the door and the company followed him down the streets of Jerusalem, where he preached that memorable sermon that won three thousand souls to Christ—more conversions in that one sermon that Peter preached, than Christ had in all His ministry. Christ knew what He was talking about when He said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

I do not think we give enough prominence to the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the adorable Trinity, in our work as ministers, and in our work as laymen.

God gave the Son, and the Son came to suffer, to die, and to rise again.

The cross was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greek. I have walked on the veranda of a country home in the mountains of north Georgia, before the day began to break in the east, and looked out upon the hills and the valleys. As I looked I could see the dim outline of mountains and valleys, a dim, meaningless picture that I could not comprehend. I went back to my room, and slept two hours, then I walked out, and looked at the same landscape,

and behold I saw, stretched before me, a panorama of valley and mountain in all of its glorious beauty, that I never dreamed existed. The cross itself to men would simply have been a dim outline of a picture that you and I could never have understood but for the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost rushed in and took possession of the hearts of those men in the upper chamber.

And now that Spirit comes to woo, and beseech, and implore, and enlighten, and convict, and convert the world to God.

It seemed, after God had loved the race and called them to Him, and they had wandered off, that they would have died without excuse; but God sent His Son to live among us, to preach to us, to instruct us, and to die for us, and yet if He had stopped at that, man would have been without excuse. But He didn't stop there. And now the Holy Ghost comes into the world, and every good resolution we have, and every good that ever inspired us, and every good deed ever done, we owe it all to the inspiration, the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit of God.

Oh, thank God! We have an ever-present, omniscient "God with us." When I bid my wife and children good-bye at home, God boards the train with me, and He is with me all the weary miles on the road that leads from home and loved ones. And I am conscious that God is at home with my family, and when I go into Christian homes, I find God present—and yet this same God is with the missionary in China, is with the thousands of preachers that stand in the pulpits of this earth, is with all, blessing us, through His Holy Spirit. Then are you surprised that the blessed Christ said,

"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you"?

O my friends, hear me! Is there in your soul a desire to be good? Is there a purpose to be good? Is there a resolution to be good? It is born under the touch of the divine Spirit upon these cold, dead hearts of ours.

This Spirit comes to woo, He comes to teach, He comes to implore, “and when he shall come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come.”

O let us say,

“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.”

O Holy Spirit, help us to walk close to God! Help us, divine Spirit, ever to be tender and impressionable! Help us ever to pray and heed the gospel of the Son of the living God!

The divine Spirit broods over each one of us to-day. He touches your heart and mine. He has touched a thousand hearts, calling them to a better life, and the most fearful sin you can commit is to wound the Spirit of God, to drive Him out of your presence and to drive Him out of your heart.

“Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

You may laugh at me, you may deride me, and you may scoff at the church. You may defy God, and you may crucify my Saviour afresh, and put Him to open shame, but I warn you take heed how you trifle with the holy Spirit of God. I have seen men reject and insult the divine Spirit, until I could almost hear the Spirit of God as He closed the gate of heaven in an immortal spirit's face. My friend, if there is in your soul a desire to be a Christian, nurse it, and foster

it, and shield it. Keep it there and pray God to fan the spark into a living flame, that shall burn on and on when the stars have gone out and the moon shall have turned to blood. Let's you and I pray for this, and whatever others may do, God help us to be impressionable and movable under the divine Spirit of grace.

"The Spirit says, Come." The third person of the ever adorable Trinity is the active agency in the world to-day to teach men, to move men, to stir men, and to use men. But for His divine presence with me as I preach the gospel to a dying world, I declare the fact that I would never have the courage to take another text before a congregation of men. How many struggles the earnest preacher has! God only knows the burdens that they carry. God alone knows the wakeful hours, the tears, the prayers of agony that go up from their hearts. How often we pray, "God save our cities, our young men, our young women! God save our fathers and mothers!" And I can almost hear God as He answers back,

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

And when the din and the smoke of the battle of life have blown away, we will find that the Lord has come up to help us against the mighty—and He says to you and to me,

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

"The Spirit says, Come." If God had stopped there—had not given His Son and sent His Spirit to woo men—we would have died without excuse; but God pushes His work on and on, until He can say to a guilty world, "What more could I have done to bring the world to salvation than that I have already done?"

God will never leave a stone unturned, God will never leave an effort unmade so long as man is out of hell. I know God is in earnest about the salvation of men, and I have felt a thousand times that the worst of sinners would rejoice if they could only see His face, with all the love of His heart as it beams forth, and hear His voice as He calls them to a better life. God loves you, and He has given you every manifestation of His love. He tells you in His blessed book,

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

The sweetest thought in God's word to me, is the fatherhood and motherhood of God, and I look up to Him and say in return, "My Father, I love Thee, with all my heart."

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Not only God's Holy Spirit is calling us to come, but the church of God, the Bride of the Lamb, is calling us. Oh, that we were wrapped in the white mantles of purity, awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom! Oh, how I wish we had always been faithful and had never dishonoured the Bridegroom! He said upon leaving us, "I go to prepare a place for you."

See that young man? He has plighted his vows with the young lady of his choice. He bids her good-bye and starts upon a journey, to win a fortune, and to prepare a home in the new country to which he is going, and get everything ready for her coming. The young lady, instead of being faithful to the young man who is preparing this home for her, is consorting with her betrothed husband's enemies, and is associating with those who despise and mistreat him. You look on and say, "God forgive that unfaithful girl." And yet, while Christ, by His divine power and infinite wisdom, is exhausting all the riches and glories

of heaven, preparing for us, His Bride, we are consorting with His enemies, with the gay and giddy and godless ones of this world. Precious Saviour! forgive us, forgive us!

"The Bride says, Come!" I wish we had lived better, but there is one thing I have found out—we know when we have been unfaithful, we know when we have been what we ought not to have been. But for this one fact I do thank God—the church of Almighty God has not lost her interest in sinners and in the world. For over one thousand years the church has been on her knees, praying for sinners, and the message of the church of God is a God-given message:

"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

You have cursed the church, and have belittled the church and have abused it and called its members hypocrites, but do you want to see whether the church loves you? If the worst sinner should come to the church with streaming eyes and say, "Men and brethren, pray for me. I want to join your company and go with you to heaven," I hear the church, in a minute, as her tears come flowing to the earth and she lifts her hands to God, say, "Blessed be thou, O God! Another sinner coming to repentance, to find eternal life." The church of God does love the world and she has been praying for the world in all the ages, and while we have forgotten a thousand times, and neglected our duty, thanks be to God! we have never neglected to pray for you, my poor lost brother! There is not a day nor a night that the church of God is not on her knees praying, "God save the wicked and save the fallen of humanity."

And the cry of the church and the song of the church is,

“Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.
Weep o’er the erring one, lift up the fallen.
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.”

Thank God for the church! She has been worth all the world to me. I know I should not have wandered, a poor, motherless orphan, but if it had not been for the church of Christ, I would have been wandering still. She has ever been good to me. She has been a mother in the best sense to me. I did not join the church because I could help it along, but I joined it that it might take me, a poor spiritual babe, in its arms, and nurture and feed and care for me. And whatever the church has been to others, I can say it has given me my meat and drink, and that it has been my stay through all the years of my Christian life.

Thank God for the church! And to-day when I look out on the church I feel a deep sympathy for the old coloured brother down South. When the preacher came around on his first visit to the appointment where the old man lived, after preaching his first sermon, he opened the door of the church. Uncle Ben, who had been a faithful member of the church for forty years, walked up and joined. The next time the preacher opened the door of the church, Uncle Ben joined again. After the service, the preacher went up to the old coloured man and asked him to tell him why he joined every time the doors of the church were opened. The old man replied, “It done dis old nigger so much good the first time he jined the church, that he ain’t never los’ no chance to jine since.” And I feel just that way in my heart. Others may live outside of the church if they choose, but I thank God that the church has ever been a crutch under my arms, helping me on to God and to the right! You will never know what you have missed by staying out

of the pale of the Church of God, and I beg you to hear the voice of the church, as it bids you,

"Come thou and go with us, and we will do thee good."

The Church of God, with her Bibles, her missionaries, her preachers, her consecrated ministry, her good women, her good men, with her Sabbath-schools, her prayer-meetings, her family altars—they all cry aloud with one voice, "Come thou and go with us, and we will do thee good."

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." It seems to me that if God had stopped there, we would have died without excuse, but He goes farther—"and let him that heareth say, Come." We get this figure from the caravan crossing the desert. When the water has all given out as the caravan crosses the desert, and man and beast are famishing, they start one man on a camel hurriedly ahead, and in about five minutes they start another, and another, in order to keep one in sound of another's voice, and they go on and on, stretched out on the plain for miles and miles. Finally the man ahead finds the oasis and shouts back, "Water! water! water! I have found water!" This is shouted from one man to another until the whole caravan hears the cry. "We have found it! We have found it!" And they hear the welcome cry and press on with all their might that they may slake their thirst and preserve their lives.

All the way from heaven to earth, God has strung out a line and He shouts it from His own lips in heaven, and we catch it up and pass it on and on, until we shout at the very gate of hell, "Come! Come! Come! Let him that heareth say, Come."

If you have ever heard the gospel, preach it to some one else and say, "Come on, let's live right and do good, and get to heaven in the end."

“Let him that heareth say, Come.” Let each man be a power that will echo the call on and on down the line. Once, one of my little boys ran up the stairs calling his brother, and when he called, “Brother, come here,” something upstairs echoed back, “Brother, come here.” He ran down to his mother and said to her, “Mamma, what is it upstairs that says, ‘Brother, come here,’ every time I say it?” His mother explained to him that it was the echo of his voice, that the walls of the room above were echoing his voice. And, brother, when God shouts from heaven, let every man be a sounding-board to echo it on and on, until the whole universe shall hear the glad story of salvation.

“Let whosoever heareth say, Come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

I have often known men go to work before the word got to them. They have gone among their friends saying, “Boys, look here! We have not done right. Suppose we give our hearts to God and go into the church and live a religious life.” How many men have been brought to Christ by men who have not been religious!

When I was in Jackson, Tennessee, I was met by the mayor and other men of the city, and they said to me, “We are going to your rooms with you, to talk with you. We have a friend in this town and we want him saved.” I said to them, “Gentlemen, I am glad you are interested in your friend’s salvation, and I trust you are Christians and members of the church.” And they said, “No, Mr. Jones, we are not Christians, but we feel an interest in our friend.” I said to them, “God says that when a kingdom is divided against itself it cannot stand, and Satan’s kingdom is surely divided in this town; his very servants are going to the ministers asking them to pray for their friends.”

When a man is interested and says, "Boys, let's do better," that man is not very far from the kingdom of God. He has put his foot over the line, and all he has to do is to put it down—one more step and he is in the kingdom of God.

"Let him that heareth say, Come." Oh, how many men and women there are who are putting their feet over the dividing line, and all they have to do is to come over fully on His side and be saved forevermore. O friend, can't you say, "God helping me, I will give myself to Him. I will wait no longer"?

"Let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come." Whether you have heard anything or not, the call is for you. If there is down in your heart a thirst, a hunger for a better life, if God has touched your life, and made it hunger and made it thirst, and if He has stood with the other hand laden with the Bread of Life and with the Water of Life to quench your thirsty soul, blessed be God! you can come. He stands ever ready to quench that thirst and appease that hunger, and He is going all over the land, and the hungriest man will be the first man to get the Bread of Life and the Water of Life.

"Let him that is athirst come." How can we doubt that He means you and me when He says, "Let him that is athirst come"? God's promises remind me of a feature in some of the large stock-farms in the West. Where the water is scarce, and large pools are in the pasture for watering the stock, the stock used to walk down to these pools of water and stand in them and muddy them, so they were unfit for drinking purposes. Many of the farmers built wooden coverings over the pools, with a plank platform at the end of which they put a trough. Now, an old ox could rear up and look down into the trough and see that it was empty and could say to the others,

"Boys, there is no use in going on that platform. There's no water in that trough." But when a thirsty old fellow walks up on that platform, the weight of his body on the platform forces the water into the trough, and when he gets to the trough, he finds it full of clear, sparkling water to quench his thirst. God has built the platform of religion over the Water of Life, and Tyndall and Darwin and others have looked up over the platform and said, "Boys, there is not a drop of water in there. I can see that trough with my own eyes." But, thank God! thirty-four years ago, I walked up on the platform of God's promises, and the pressure of my weight on this platform forced the Water of Life up into the trough, and I drank that which makes a man thirst no more. And, thank God! here is the platform, for every soul on earth. "Let him that is athirst come."

If down in your heart there is a desire to do right, start right now. If there is a hunger for a better life, God says,

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." He stands ever ready to flood our souls with the Water of Life.

Many years ago, I was in Huntsville, Alabama, when a friend walked with me over to a beautiful spring in the heart of the city. As I looked at the spring I saw that a dam had been put across it, and I said, "Why do you dam up the water of this spring?" The man said, "We do that so the fall will be sufficient to turn the turbine." "And why do you want to turn the turbine?" I asked. "We do that so the pump can force the water up all over the city." "Do you mean to say that this spring not only supplies the city with water but that it has the inherent power to throw itself into every home in Huntsville?" And as I walked away, I said, "Blessed be God, for the power

of the Water of Life. With God's turbine wheel it has power to throw itself into the thirsty soul of every man who walks this earth, if he will only receive it."

And now He says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Oh, how far down the line God brings this to us! He brings it right down to where He throws heaven and hell at every man's feet and tells him to take his choice. I like the grand "whosoever" there. I have read a great deal about elections, but I think I have found out from God's word what is meant by election. Thank God, the elect are the "whosoever wills" and the non-elect are the "whosoever won'ts." Now on which side are you? Are you of the elect—the "whosoever wills"; or the non-elects—the "whosoever won'ts"?

Oh, that we preachers would preach less doctrine and more of Jesus Christ! A little Methodist preacher in the pulpit preaching on infant baptism, and the whole town going to hell! A little Presbyterian preacher in his pulpit, preaching about the final perseverance of the saints and the elect, and not half his gang have anything to persevere on. The Baptist preacher hollering, "Water, water," and half his crowd going where there is no water. The Episcopal minister who is always ringing the changes on apostolic succession, and a great many of his crowd had better be looking to where they are going than to where they came from. And, oh, the sad fact, that in many of our churches we are nothing more than a crocheting society. We can get up suppers, bazaars, and fairs, but get after us about visiting the sick and raising the fallen, and caring for the lost, and we are not in it at all.

And right here let me say I am sorry for the preacher who has a creed that needs defense. The Methodist creed cannot be swallowed by a great many

men. The Presbyterian creed won't go down many people, nor will the Baptist's. And when we boil it down to its last analysis, it comes to this, God never said “whosoever believes in the five points of Calvin,” nor “whosoever believeth in infant baptism,” or in “immersion,” or in “the perseverance of the saints,” or in “the immutability of the Pope,” or in “apostolic succession,” but He did say, “Whosoever believeth on Jesus Christ shall be saved.”

Our creed is nothing more than the duster we put on over our cloth coats to keep off the dirt of this world, and when we reach the pearly gates of heaven, we shall take off our dusters, and walk in, clothed only in the righteous robes of Jesus Christ. It is astonishing that we quarrel so over the quality of our dusters!

Oh, for a church universal! When we, as followers of the lowly Nazarene, who died to save every man who would come unto Him, get our hearts so filled with love for Him, and all else eliminated, then, and only then, shall we see the one church of God, the church universal!

Thank God for that grand old word, “whosoever.” And thank God that as the ages wear away men see God in nature, see God in all His goodness, see God in His Book—and preachers are coming closer to that grand old word every day. I believe that I shall live to see the day when every pulpit in this world will be bottomed on the grand old “whosoever will,” and there they will stand for ages and preach the gospel of the Son of man.

“Whosoever will.” That reminds me of a penitent in Georgia who came to the altar during a revival service. The preacher went to him and said, trying to encourage him, “Won't you take Jesus Christ as your Saviour?” The young man said, “I am not

one of the elect. I am one of the reprobates. I feel it all over"—and I don't suppose a poor soul ever tried to seek God, that the devil didn't slip up and say, "You are one of the reprobates. God didn't die to save you." The preacher said to him, "Well, my brother, listen to me a minute. If you could see your name, James B. Green, written on the Lamb's Book, would you believe that Christ died for you and that you were one of the elect?" The poor fellow thought a moment and then said, "No, sir: There are so many more people of that name." "If you could see your name, James B. Green, Screven County, Georgia, would you believe it then?" "No, there might have been other men there of that name before I was born." "Well, if you could see it, James B. Green, Screven County, Georgia, the year 1867, would you then believe it meant you?" "No, there may be some one else at this time by that name." "Then," said the preacher, "if you could see it, James B. Green, Screven County, Georgia, the Nineteenth district and the year 1867, would you believe it was you?" The young man said, "I could not know definitely." "Now," said the preacher, "God Almighty saw all that trouble and He just put it into these two words and said 'whosoever will,' " and the poor fellow jumped up and clapped his hands and said, "Thank God, I know that means me." Blessed be God, it is for all! It means all.

Listen, brother, it isn't whosoever feels, whosoever is fit, whosoever has repented, or whosoever has faith, nor is it whosoever has done this, or that, or the other, but thank God it is, "whosoever will." And if we will, God will, and if we won't, the devil will.

Oh, the yearning that was in our Saviour's voice when He said,

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee,

how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?"

"Ye will not come unto me that ye might receive eternal life."

God throws it all on the will, and I am glad that He does. God traverses my emotional nature, and runs through hope, fear, desire, anxiety, dread, and affection. God goes all through my sensibilities. When God reaches intellect, He goes up through perception, and conception, and judgment, and mercy, and reason, and all the faculties of the mind. God goes through them all and asks me no questions. But when God goes to the door of the human heart, He stands on tiptoe and knocks and says,

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Thank God, it is "whosoever will." God doesn't say, "Whosoever feels" this or that or the other, but He throws it on our wills and says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Blessed be God, ye thirsty men can drink, and there is enough for to-day and enough for us all, and enough forevermore.

There is a little word in that sentence that I like—the little word "let"—"let him take the water of life freely."

Six thousand years ago God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. It was a word of command, and now God looks out upon a famishing race, with the water of life in reach, and says, "Let him come." When God says, "Let him come," He says, "Go behind him, powers and principalities, clear the way. Let him take the water of life freely." God has digged down the mountains and filled up the val-

leys, and made a straight and smooth way, so that you may come unto Him and drink and live forevermore; and if you perish, you perish because you will not live. God never suffered an unwilling soul to be captured and carried away by the enemy of souls, and He never will so long as you look to Christ for salvation. God never suffered the devil to take possession of an immortal soul and drag it down to hell, until that soul walked up to the feet of the devil and stacked its arms and said, "I surrender forever." Then God's own power can never rescue that soul.

Oh, won't you say with me, "God's goodness leadeth me to repentance"? Oh, may He help you, before it is too late, to go out with God's high tide of love and goodness, and be forever safe within the depths of His mercy.

This incident was given me by a presiding elder under whom I served as a young preacher. He said, "Many years ago, when a little boy, I lived on the coast of Florida. My home was near the shore of the Atlantic Ocean, and I often saw the ships, laden with their cargo, as they passed to and fro, to their destination. One morning in the fall of the year, after a fearful all-night storm, I walked down to the beach and saw a large sailing vessel stranded on the sands. The tide had gone out, and she was high and dry. I went through the ship, and standing on the deck, I said to her, 'Old ship, what ill wind stranded you on these shores?' Many a day I have played in her hold and when the spring tides came, I said, 'Now, old ship, you go out on this tide. This is your time to go out to sea.' I saw the old ship as the waters surrounded her, and as she seemed to straighten up and settle herself, as if making an effort to go out with that tide. As she careened from side to side, she seemed to make a desperate effort to free herself. The

next morning I got up early and looked out, and there was the old ship, high and dry. When the fall tides came in, I said, ‘Old ship, go out to sea. It seems to me that this is the highest tide I ever saw. Poor old ship, go out to sea.’ But again she was left, high and dry. When the spring tide came again, I said, ‘Old ship go out to sea, I am afraid you will never see another tide. Go out, go out to sea.’ But she was left, high and dry, with the going out of the tide.

“One morning I got up and, looking out, I saw the old ship was gone. I threw up my hat and said, ‘I am so glad the old ship has gone out to sea,’ and I shall never forget my childish glee. But when I walked down to the beach, I saw that she had crumbled and fallen into a thousand pieces. And as I looked at that wreck I said, ‘Poor, poor old ship, how often I begged you to go out to sea before it was too late! Oh, how many high tides have swept these shores since you were stranded here! Now it is too late!’”

O that we might go out on the high tide of God’s mercy. That we would answer the last, great, divine call in His precious Word, and not delay, and at last sink down into eternal shipwreck on the shores of damnation.

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